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THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON I

NAPOLEON WITH THE CZAR ALEXANDER I. AND THE KING AND QUEEN OF PRUSSIA AT TILSIT.

From the painting by Gosse at Versailles.

The Life of Napoleon I

INCLUDING NEW MATERIALS
FROM THE BRITISH OFFICIAL RECORDS

BY

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"Let my son often read and reflect on history: this is the only true philosophy."

—*Napoleon's last Instructions for the King of Rome.*

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CHAPTER XXII

ULM AND TRAFALGAR

"Napoleon is the only man in Europe that knows the value of time."—CZARTORYSKI.

BEFORE describing the Continental campaign which shattered the old European system to its base, it will be well to take a brief glance at the events which precipitated the war of the Third Coalition. Even at the time of Napoleon's rupture with England, his high-handed conduct towards the Italian Republic, Holland, Switzerland, and in regard to the Secularizations in Germany, had exposed him to the hostility of Russia, Sweden, and Austria; but as yet it took the form of secret resentment. The last-named Power, under the Ministry of Count Cobenzl, had relapsed into a tame and undignified policy, which the Swedish Ambassador at Vienna described as "one of fear and hope—fear of the power of France, and hope to obtain favours from her."[1] At Berlin, Frederick William clung nervously to neutrality, even though the French occupation of Hanover was a threat to Prussia's influence in North Germany. The Czar Alexander was, at present, wrapt up in home affairs; and the only monarch who as yet ventured to show his dislike of the First Consul was the King of Sweden. In the autumn of 1803 Gustavus IV. defiantly refused Napoleon's proposals for a Franco-Swedish alliance, baited though they were with the offer of Norway as an eventual prize for Sweden, and a subsidy for every Swedish warship serving against England. And it was not the dislike of a proud nature to receive money

[1] Armfeldt to Drake, December 24th, 1803 ("F. O.," Bavaria, No. 27).

which prompted his refusal; for Gustavus, while in Germany, hinted to Drake that he desired to have pecuniary help from England for the defence of his province of Pomerania.[1]

But a doughtier champion of European independence was soon to enter the field. The earlier feelings of respect and admiration which the young Czar had cherished towards Napoleon were already overclouded, when the news of the execution of the Duc d'Enghien at once roused a storm of passion in his breast. The chivalrous protection which he loved to extend to smaller States, the guarantee of the Germanic system which the Treaty of Teschen had vested in him, above all, his horror at the crime, led him to offer an emphatic protest. The Russian Court at once went into mourning, and Alexander expressed both to the German Diet and to the French Government his indignation at the outrage. It was ever Napoleon's habit to return blow with blow; and he now instructed Talleyrand to reply that in the D'Enghien affair he had acted solely on the defensive, and that Russia's complaint "led him to ask if, at the time when England was compassing the assassination of Paul I., the authors of the plot had been known to be one league beyond the [Russian] frontiers, every effort would not have been made to have them seized?" Never has a poisoned dart been more deftly sped at the weak spot of an enemy's armour. The Czar, ever haunted by the thought of his complicity in a parricidal plot, was deeply wounded by this malicious taunt, and all the more so because, as the death of Paul had been officially ascribed to a fit, the insult could not be flung back.[2] The only reply was to break off all diplomatic relations with Napoleon; and this took place in the summer of 1804.[3]

Yet war was not to break out for more than a year. This delay was due to several causes. Austria could not be moved from her posture of timid neutrality. In fact,

[1] Drake's despatch of December 15th, 1803, *ib.*

[2] Czartoryski, "Memoirs," vol. ii., ch. ii.

[3] The Czar's complaints were: the exile of the King of Sardinia, the reoccupation of S. Italy by the French, the changes in Italy, the violation of the neutrality of Baden, the occupation of Cuxhaven by the French, and the levying of ransom from the Hanse Towns to escape the same fate ("F. O.," Russia, No. 56).

Francis II. and Cobenzl saw in Napoleon's need of a recognition of his new imperial title a means of assuring a corresponding change of title for the Hapsburg Dominions. Francis had long been weary of the hollow dignity of Elective Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The faded pageantry of Ratisbon and Frankfurt was all that remained of the glories of the realm of Charlemagne: the medley of States which owned him as elected lord cared not for the decrees of this ghostly realm; and Goethe might well place in the mouth of his jovial toper, in the cellar scene of "Faust," the words:

"Dankt Gott mit jedem Morgen
Dass Ihr nicht braucht für's Röm'sche Reich zu sorgen!"

In that bargaining and burglarious age, was it not better to build a more lasting habitation than this venerable ruin? Would not the hereditary dominions form a more lasting shelter from the storm? Such were doubtless the thoughts that prompted the assumption of the title of Hereditary Emperor of Austria (August 11th, 1804). The letter-patent, in which this change was announced, cited as parallels "the example of the Imperial Court of Russia in the last century and of the new sovereign of France." Both references gave umbrage to Alexander, who saw no parallel between the assumption of the title of Emperor by Peter the Great and the game of follow-the-leader played by Francis to Napoleon.[1]

Prussian complaisance to the French Emperor was at this time to be expected. Frederick William III. reigned over 10,000,000 subjects; he could marshal 248,000 of the best trained troops in Europe, and his revenue was more fruitful than that of the great Frederick. Yet the effective power of Prussia had sadly waned; for her policy was now marked by an enervating indecision. In the autumn of 1804, however, the Prussian King was for a time spurred into action by the news that Sir George Rumbold, British envoy at Hamburg, had been seized on the night of October 24th, by French troops, and carried off to Paris. This aggression upon the Circle of Lower

[1] Lord Harrowby to Admiral Warren ("F. O.," Russia, No. 56).

Saxony, of which Frederick William was Director, aroused lively indignation at Berlin; and the King at once wrote to Napoleon a request for the envoy's liberation as a proof of his "friendship and high consideration . . . a seal on the past and a pledge for the future."

To this appeal Napoleon returned a soothing answer that Sir George would at once be released, though England was ever violating the rights of neutrals, and her agents were conspiring against his life.[1] The Emperor, in fact, saw that he had taken a false step, which might throw Prussia into the arms of England and Russia. For this latter Power had already (May, 1804) offered her armed help to the Court of Berlin in case the French should violate any other German territory.[2] But the King was easily soothed; and when, in the following spring, Napoleon sent seven Golden Eagles of the Legion of Honour to the Court of Berlin, seven Black Eagles of the renowned Prussian Order were sent in return — an occurrence which led Gustavus IV. to return his Order of the Black Eagle with the remark that he could not recognize "Napoleon and his like" as comrades in an Order of Chivalry and Religion.[3] Napoleon's aim was achieved: Prussia was sundered from any league in which Gustavus IV. was a prominent member.

Thus, the chief steps in the formation of the Third Coalition were taken by Sweden, England, and Russia. Early in 1804 Gustavus proposed a League of the Powers; and, on the advent of the Pitt Ministry to office, overtures began to pass between St. Petersburg and London for an alliance. The first advances were made by Pitt and our Foreign Minister, the Earl of Harrowby, in a note of June 26th, 1804, in which hopes were expressed that Russia, England, Austria, Sweden, and if possible Prussia, might be drawn together.[4] Alexander and Czartoryski were already debating the advantages of an alliance with England. Their aims were certainly noble. International

[1] Lord Harrowby to Admiral Warren ("F. O.," Russia, No. 56).
[2] Garden, "Traités," vol. viii., p. 302; Ulmann, "Russisch-Preussische Politik," p. 117.
[3] See the letter in the "Paget Papers," vol. ii., p. 158.
[4] "F. O.," Russia, No. 177.

law and the rights of the weak States bordering on France were to be championed, and it was suggested by Czartoryski that disputes should be settled, not by force but by arbitration.[1]

The statement of these exalted ideas was intrusted to a special envoy to London, M. Novossiltzoff, who propounded to Pitt the scheme of a European polity where the States should be independent and enjoy institutions "founded on the sacred rights of humanity." With this aim in view, the Czar desired to curb the power of Napoleon, bring back France to her old limits, and assure the peace of Europe on a firm basis, namely on the principle of the *balance of power*. Pitt and Lord Harrowby having agreed to these proposals, details were discussed at the close of 1804. None of the allies were, in any case, to make a separate peace; and England (said M. Novossiltzoff) must not only use her own troops, but grant subsidies to enable the Powers to set on foot effective forces.

This last sentence claims special notice, as it disposes of the well-worn phrase, that the Third Coalition was *built up* by Pitt's gold. On the contrary, Russia was the first to set forth the need of English subsidies, which Pitt was by no means eager to supply. The phrase used by French historians is doubtless correct in so far as English gold enabled our allies to arm efficiently; but it is wholly false if it implies that the Third Coalition was merely trumped up by our money, and that the Russian, Austrian, and Swedish Governments were so many automatic machines which, if jogged with coins, would instantly supply armies to the ready money purchaser. This is practically the notion still prevalent on the Continent; and it is clearly traceable to the endless diatribes against Pitt's gold with which Napoleon seasoned his bulletins, and to the caricatures which he *ordered to be drawn*. The following was his direction to his Minister of Police, Fouché: "Have caricatures made — an Englishman purse in hand, *entreating the various Powers to take his money. This is the real direction to give the whole business.*" How well he knew mankind: he rightly counted on its gullibility where pictures were concerned; and the direction which he thus

[1] Czartoryski's "Mems.," vol. ii., chs. ii.–iv.

gave to public opinion bids fair to persist, in spite of every exposure of the trickery.[1]

But, to return to the plans of the allies, Holland, Switzerland, and Italy were to be liberated from their "enslavement to France," and strengthened so as to provide barriers to future aggressions: the King of Sardinia was to be restored to his mainland possessions, and receive in addition the Ligurian, or Genoese, Republic.[2] On all essential topics the British Government was in full accord with the views of the Czar, and Pitt insisted on the need of a system of international law which should guarantee the Continent against further rapacious acts. But Europe was not destined to find peace on these principles until after ten years of desolating war.

Various causes hindered the formation of this league. On January 2nd, 1805, Napoleon sent to George III. an offer of peace; and those persons who did not see that this was a device for discovering the course of negotiations believed that he ardently desired it. We now know that the offer was despatched a week after he had ordered Missiessy to ravage the British West Indies.[3] And, doubtless, his object was attained when George III. replied in the speech from the throne (January 15th) that he could not entertain the proposal without reference to the Powers with whom he was then engaged in confidential intercourse, and especially the Emperor of Russia. Yet the British

[1] "Lettres inédites de Napoléon" (May 30th, 1805).

[2] See Novossiltzoff's Report in Czartoryski's "Memoirs," vol. ii., ch. iv., and Pitt's note developing the Russian proposals in Garden's "Traités," vol. viii., pp. 317–323, or Alison, App. to ch. xxxix. A comparison of these two memoranda will show that on Continental questions there was no difference such as Thiers affected to see between the generous policy of Russia and the "cold egotism" of Pitt. As Czartoryski has proved in his "Memoirs" (vol. ii., ch. x.), Thiers has erred in assigning importance to a mere first draft of a conversation which Czartoryski had with that ingenious schemer, the Abbé Piatoli. The official proposals sent from St. Petersburg to London were very different; *e.g.*, the proposal of Alexander with regard to the French frontiers was this: "The first object is to bring back France into its ancient limits, or such other ones as might appear most suitable to the general tranquillity of Europe." It is, therefore, futile to state that this was solely the policy of Pitt after he had "remodelled" the Russian proposals.

[3] "Corresp.," No. 8231. See too Bourrienne, Miot de Melito, vol. ii., ch. iv., and Thiers, bk. xxi.

Government discussed with the Czar the basis for a future pacification of Europe; and the mission of Novossiltzoff at midsummer to Berlin, on his way to Paris, was the answer, albeit a belated one, to Napoleon's New Year's pacific appeal. We shall now see why this delay occurred, and what acts of the French Emperor finally dispelled all hopes of peace.

The delay was due to differences between Russia and England respecting Malta and our maritime code. The Czar insisted on our relinquishing Malta and relaxing the rigours of the right of search for deserters from our navy. To this the Pitt Ministry demurred, seeing that Malta was our only means of protecting the Mediterranean States, and our only security against French aggressions in the Levant, while the right of searching neutral vessels was necessary to prevent the enfeebling of our navy.[1] Negotiations were nearly broken off even after a treaty between the two Powers had been brought to the final stage on April 11th, 1805; but in July (after the Czar had recorded his solemn protest against our keeping Malta) it was ratified, and formed the basis for the Third Coalition. The aims of the allies were to bring about the expulsion of French troops from North Germany; to assure the independence of the Republics of Holland and Switzerland; and to reinstate the King of Sardinia in Piedmont. Half a million of men were to be set in motion, besides the forces of Great Britain; and the latter Power, as a set-off to her lack of troops, agreed to subsidize her allies to the extent of £1,250,000 a year for every 100,000 men actually employed in the war. It was further stipulated that a European Congress at the close of the war should endeavour to fix more surely the principles of the Law of

[1] This refusal has been severely criticised. But the knowledge of the British Government that Napoleon was still persevering with his schemes against Turkey, and that the Russians themselves, from their station at Corfu, were working to gain a foothold on the Albanian coast, surely prescribed caution ("F. O.," Russia, Nos. 55 and 56, despatches of June 26th and October 10th, 1804). It was further known that the Austrian Government had proposed to the Czar plans that were hostile to Turkey, and were not decisively rejected at St. Petersburg; and it is clear from the notes left by Czartoryski that the prospect of gaining Corfu, Moldavia, parts of Albania, and the precious prize of Constantinople was kept in view by his master.

Nations and establish a federative system. Above all, the allies bound themselves not to hinder the popular wish in France respecting the form of government — a clause which deprived the war of the Third Coalition of that monarchical character which had pervaded the league of 1793 and, to a less extent, that of 1799.[1]

What was the attitude of Napoleon towards this league? He certainly took little pains to conciliate the Czar. In fact, his actions towards Russia were almost openly provocative. Thus, while fully aware of the interest which Alexander felt in the restoration of the King of Sardinia, he sent the proposal that that unlucky King should receive the Ionian Isles and Malta as indemnities for his losses, and that too when Russia looked upon Corfu as her own. To this offer the Czar deigned not a word in reply. Napoleon also sent an envoy to the Shah of Persia with an offer of alliance, so as to check the advances of Russia on the shores of the Caspian.[2]

On the other hand, he used every effort to allure Prussia, by secretly offering her Hanover, and that too as early as the close of July.[3] For a brief space, also, he took some pains to conciliate Austria. This indeed was necessary: for the Court of Vienna had already (November 6th, 1804) framed a secret agreement with Russia to make war on Napoleon if he committed any new aggression in Italy or menaced any part of the Turkish Empire.[4] Yet this act was really defensive. Francis desired only to protect himself against Napoleon's ambition, and, had he been treated with consideration, would doubtless have clung to peace.

For a time Napoleon humoured that Court, even as regards the changes now mooted in Italy. On January 1st, 1805, he wrote to Francis, stating that he was about

[1] Garden, "Traités," vol. viii., pp. 328–333. It is clear that Gustavus IV. was the ruler who insisted on making the restoration of the Bourbons the chief aim of the Third Coalition. In our "F. O. Records" (Sweden, No. 177) is an account (August 20th, 1804) of a conversation of Lord Harrowby with the Swedish ambassador, who stated that such a declaration would "palsy the arms of France." Our Foreign Minister replied that it would "much more certainly palsy the arms of England: that we made war because France was become too powerful for the peace of Europe."

[2] "Corresp.," No. 8329.

[3] Bailleu, "Preussen und Frankreich," vol. ii., p. 354.

[4] Thiers (bk. xxi.) gives the whole text.

to proclaim Joseph Bonaparte King of Italy, if the latter would renounce his claim to the crown of France, and so keep the governments of France and Italy separate, as the Treaty of Lunéville required; that this action would enfeeble his (Napoleon's) power, but would carry its own recompense if it proved agreeable to the Emperor Francis. But it soon appeared that Joseph was by no means inclined to accept the crown of Lombardy if it entailed the sacrifice of all hope of succeeding to the French Empire. He had already demurred to *le vilain titre de roi*, and on January 27th announced his final rejection of the offer. Napoleon then proposed to Louis that he should hold that crown in trust for his son; but the suggestion at once rekindled the flames of jealousy which ever haunted Louis; and, after a violent scene, the Emperor thrust his brother from the room.

Perhaps this anger was simulated. He once admitted that his rage only mounted this high — pointing to his chin; and the refusals of his brothers were certainly to be expected. However that may be, he now resolved to assume that crown himself, appointing as Viceroy his stepson, Eugène Beauharnais. True, he announced to the French Senate that the realms of France and Italy would be kept separate: but neither the Italian deputies, who had been summoned to Paris to vote this dignity to their master, nor the servile Senate, nor the rulers of Europe, were deceived. Thus, when in the early summer Napoleon reviewed a large force that fought over again in mimic war the battle of Marengo; when, amidst all the pomp and pageantry that art could devise, he crowned himself in the cathedral of Milan with the iron circlet of the old Lombard Kings, using the traditional formula: "God gave it me, woe to him who touches it"; when, finally, he incorporated the Ligurian Republic in the French Empire, Francis of Austria reluctantly accepted the challenges thus threateningly cast down, and began to arm.[1] The records of our Foreign Office show conclu-

[1] The annexation of the Ligurian or Genoese Republic took place on June 4th, the way having been prepared there by Napoleon's former patron, Salicetti, who liberally dispensed bribes. A little later the Republic of Lucca was bestowed on Elisa Bonaparte and her spouse,

sively that the Hapsburg ruler felt himself girt with difficulties: the Austrian army was as yet ill organized: the reforms after which the Archduke Charles had been striving were ill received by the military clique; and the sole result had been to unsettle rather than strengthen the army, and to break down the health of the Archduke.[1] Yet the intention of Napoleon to treat Italy as a French province was so insultingly paraded that Francis felt war to be inevitable, and resolved to strike a blow while the French were still entangled in their naval schemes. He knew well the dangers of war; he would have eagerly welcomed any sign of really peaceful intentions at Paris; but no signs were given; in fact, French agents were sent into Switzerland to intrigue for a union of that land with France. Here again the pride of the Hapsburgs was cut to the quick, and they disdained to submit to humiliations such as were eating the heart out of the Prussian monarchy.

The Czar, too, was far from eager for war. He had sent Novossiltzoff to Berlin *en route* for Paris, in the hope of coming to terms with Napoleon, when the news of the annexation of Genoa ended the last hopes of a compromise. "This man is insatiable," exclaimed Alexander; "his ambition knows no bounds; he is a scourge of the world; he wants war; well, he shall have it, and the sooner the better." The Czar at once ordered all negotiations to be broken off. Novossiltzoff, on July 10th, declared to Baron Hardenberg, the successor of Haugwitz at the Prussian Foreign Office, that Napoleon had now passed the utmost limits of the Czar's patience; and he at once returned his French passports. In forwarding them to the French ambassador at Berlin, Hardenberg expressed the deep regret of the Prussian monarch at the breakdown of this most salutary negotiation — a phrase which showed that the patience of Berlin was nearly exhausted.[2]

now named Prince Bacciochi. Parma, hitherto administered by a French governor, was incorporated in the French Empire about the same time.

[1] Paget to Lord Mulgrave (March 19th, 1805).

[2] Beer, "Zehn Jahre oesterreich. Politik (1801–1810)." The notes of Novossiltzoff and Hardenberg are printed in Sir G. Jackson's "Diaries," vol. i., App.

Clearly, then, the Third Coalition was not cemented by English gold, but by Napoleon's provocations. While England and Russia found great difficulty in coming to an accord, and Austria was arming only from fear, the least act of complaisance on his part would have unravelled this ill-knit confederacy. But no such action was forthcoming. All his letters written in North Italy after his coronation are puffed up with incredible insolence. Along with hints to Eugène to base politics on dissimulation and to seek only to be feared, we find letters to Ministers at Paris scorning the idea that England and Russia can come to terms, and asserting that the annexation of Genoa concerns England alone ; but if Austria wants to find a pretext for war, she may now find it.

Then he hurries back to Fontainebleau, covering the distance from Turin in eighty-five hours ; and, after a brief sojourn at St. Cloud, he reaches Boulogne. There, on August the 22nd, he hears that Austria is continuing to arm : a few hours later comes the news that Villeneuve has turned back to Cadiz. Fiercely and trenchantly he resolves this fateful problem. He then sketches to Talleyrand the outlines of his new policy. He will again press, and this time most earnestly, his offer of Hanover to Prussia as the price of her effective alliance against the new coalition. Perhaps this new alliance will strangle the coalition at its birth ; at any rate it will paralyze Austria. Accordingly, he despatches to Berlin his favourite aide-de-camp, General Duroc, to persuade the King that his alliance will save the Continent from war.[1]

[1] See Bignon, vol. iv., pp. 271 and 334. Probably Napoleon knew through Laforest and Talleyrand that Russia had recently urged that George III. should offer Hanover to Prussia. Pitt rejected the proposal. Prussia paid more heed to the offer of Hanover from Napoleon than to the suggestions of Czartoryski that she might receive it from its rightful owner, George III. Yet Duroc did not succeed in gaining more from Frederick William than the promise of his neutrality (see Garden, "Traités," vol. viii., pp. 339–346). Sweden was not a member of the Coalition, but made treaties with Russia and England.

The high hopes nursed by the Pitt Ministry are seen in the following estimate of the forces that would be launched against France : Austria, 250,000 ; Russia, 180,000 ; Prussia, 100,000 (Pitt then refused to subsidize

Meanwhile the Hapsburgs were completely deceived. They imagined Napoleon to be wholly immersed in his naval enterprise, and accordingly formed a plan of campaign, which, though admirable against a weak and guileless foe, was fraught with danger if the python's coils were ready for a spring. As a matter of fact, he was far better prepared than Austria. As late as July 7th, the Court of Vienna had informed the allies that its army would not be ready for four months; yet the nervous anxiety of the Hapsburgs to be beforehand with Napoleon led them to hurry on war: and on August 9th they secretly gave their adhesion to the Russo-British alliance.

Then, too, by a strange fatuity, their move into Bavaria was to be made with a force of only 59,000 men, while their chief masses, some 92,000 strong, were launched into Italy against the strongholds on the Mincio. To guard the flanks of these armies, Austria had 34,000 men in Tyrol; but, apart from raw recruits, there were fewer than 20,000 soldiers in the rest of that vast empire. In fact, the success of the autumn campaign was known to depend on the help of the Russians, who were expected to reach the banks of the Inn before the 20th of October, while it was thought that the French could not possibly reach the Danube till twenty days later.[1] It was intended, however, to act most vigorously in Italy, and to wage a defensive campaign on the Danube.

Such was the plan concocted at Vienna, mainly under the influence of the Archduke Charles, who took the command of the army in Italy, while that of the Danube was assigned to the Archduke Ferdinand and Mack, the new Quartermaster-General. This soldier had hitherto enjoyed a great reputation in Austria, probably because he

more than 100,000); Sweden, 16,000; Saxony, 16,000; Hesse and Brunswick, 16,000; Mecklenburg, 3,000; King of Sardinia, 25,000; Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden, 25,000; Naples, 20,000. In a P. S. he adds that the support of the King of Sardinia would not be needed, and that England had private arrangements with Naples as to subsidies. This memoir is not dated, but it must belong to the beginning of September, before the defection of Bavaria was known ("F. O.," Prussia, No. 70).

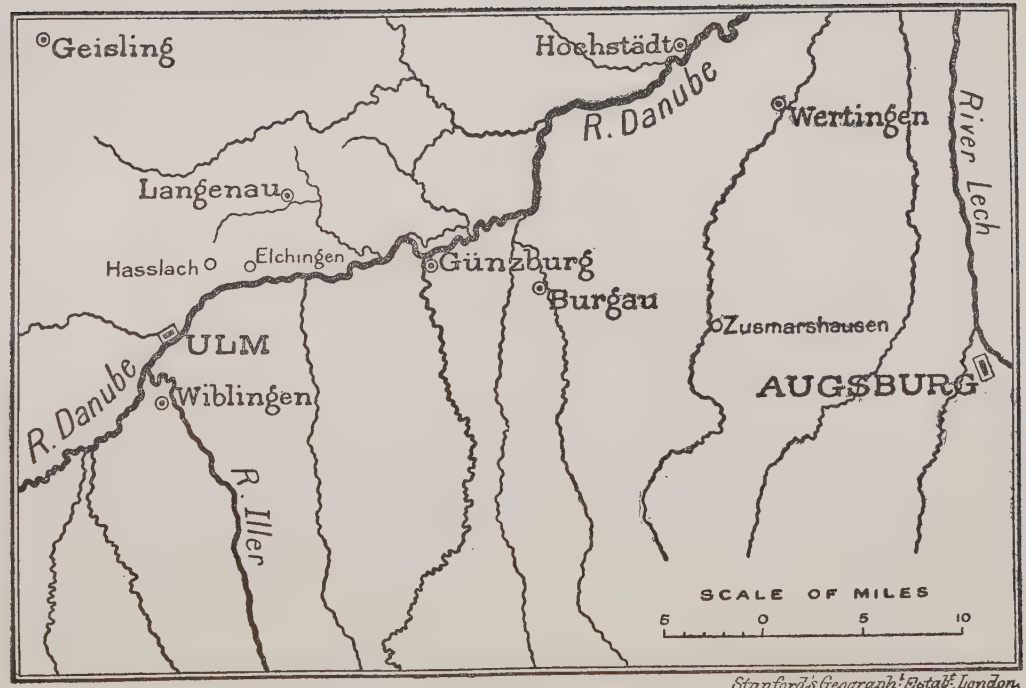
[1] "F. O.," Russia, No. 57; Gower's note of July 22nd, 1805.

was the only general who had suffered no great defeat. Amidst the disasters of 1797 he seemed the only man able to retrieve the past, and to be shut out from command by Thugut's insane jealousy of his "transcendent abilities."[1] Brave he certainly was: but his mind was always swayed by preconceived notions; he belonged to the school of "manœuvre strategists," of whom the Duke of Brunswick was the leader; and he now began the campaign of 1805 with the fixed purpose of holding a commanding military position. Such a position the Emperor Francis and Mack had discovered in the weak fortress of Ulm and the line of the River Iller. Towards these points of vantage the Austrians now began to move.

The first thing was to gain over the Elector of Bavaria. The Court of Vienna, seeking to persuade or compel that prince to join the Coalition, made overtures (September 3rd to 6th) with which he dallied for a day or two until an opportunity came of escaping to the fortress of Würzburg. Mack thereupon crossed the River Inn and sought, but in vain, to cut off the Bavarian troops from that stronghold. Accordingly, the Austrian leader marched on to Ulm, where he arrived in the middle of September; and, not satisfied with holding this advanced position, he pushed on his outposts to the chief defiles of the Black Forest, while other regiments held the valley of the River Iller and strengthened the fortress of Memmingen. Doubtless this would have been good strategy, had his forces been equal in numbers to those of Napoleon. At that time the Black Forest was the only physical barrier between France and Southern Germany; the Rhine was then practically a French river; and, only by holding the passes of that range could the Austrians hope to screen Swabia from invasion on the side of Alsace.

But Mack forgot two essential facts. Until the Russians arrived, he was too weak to hold so advanced a position in what was hostile ground, now that Bavaria

[1] Colonel Graham's despatches, which undoubtedly influenced the Pitt Ministry in favouring the appointment of Mack to the present command. Paget ("Papers," vol. ii., p. 238) states that the Iller position was decided on by Francis. The best analysis of Mack's character is in Bernhardi's "Memoirs of Count Toll" (vol. i., p. 121). The State Papers are in Burke's "Campaign of 1805," App.



Stanford's Geograph.l Estabt, London.

and the other South German States obeyed Napoleon's summons to range themselves on his side. Further, he was dangerously exposed on the north, as a glance at the map will show. Ulm and the line of the Iller formed a strong defence against the south-west: but on the north that position is singularly open: it can be turned from the valleys of the Main, the Neckar, and the Altmühl, all of which conduct an invader to the regions east of Ulm. Indeed, it passes belief how even the Aulic Council could have ignored the dangers of that position. Possibly the fact that Ulm had been stoutly held by Kray in 1796 now induced them to overrate its present importance; but at that time the fortified camp of Ulm was the central knot of vast operations, whereas now it was but an advanced outpost.[1] If Francis and his advisers were swayed by historical reminiscences it is strange that they forgot the fate of Melas in Piedmont. The real parallel had been provided, not by Kray, but by the general who was cut off at Marengo. Indeed, in its broad outlines, the campaign of Ulm resembles that of Marengo. Against foes who had thrust their columns far from their base, Napoleon now, as in 1800, determined to deal a crushing blow. On the part of the Austrians we notice the same misplaced confidence, the same lack of timely news, and the same inability to understand Napoleon's plan until his dispositions are complete; while his strategy and tactics in 1805 recall to one's mind the masterly simplicity of design, the subtlety and energy of execution, which led up to his triumph in the plains of Piedmont.

Meanwhile the allies were dissipating their strength. A Russian corps, acting from Corfu as a base, and an English expedition from Malta, were jointly to attack St. Cyr in the south of Italy, raise the country at his rear and compel him to surrender. This plan was left helplessly flapping in the air by a convention which Napoleon imposed on the Neapolitan ambassador. On September 21st Talleyrand induced that envoy to guarantee the neutrality of the kingdom of Naples, all belligerents being excluded from its domains. Consequently St. Cyr's corps

[1] Marmont, "Mems.," vol. ii., p. 310.

evacuated that land and brought a welcome reinforcement to Masséna on the Mincio. Equally skilful was Napoleon's action as regards Hanover. On that side also the allies planned a formidable expedition. From the fortress of Stralsund in Swedish Pomerania, a force of Russians and Swedes, which Gustavus burned to command, was to march into Hanover, and, when strengthened by an Anglo-Hanoverian corps, drive the French from the Low Countries. It is curious to contrast the cumbrous negotiations concerning this expedition — the quarrels about the command, the anxiety at the outset lest Villeneuve should perhaps sail into the Baltic, the delays of the British War Office, the remonstrances of the Czar, and the efforts to avert the jealousy of Prussia — with the serene indifference of Napoleon as to the whole affair. He knew full well that the war would not be decided by diversions at the heel of Italy or on the banks of the Ems, but by the shock of great masses of men on the Danube. He denuded Hanover of French troops, except at its southern fortress of Hameln, so that he could overwhelm the levies of Austria before the Russians came up. In brief, while the Coalition sought, like a Briareus, to envelop him on all sides, he prepared to deal a blow at its heart.

As the first part of the campaign depended almost entirely on problems of time and space, it will be well to follow the chief movements of the hostile forces somewhat closely. The Austrian plan aimed at forestalling the French in the occupation of Swabia; and its apparent success puffed up Mack with boundless confidence. At Ulm he threw up extensive outworks to strengthen that obsolete fortress, extended his lines to Memmingen far on the south, and trusted that the Muscovites would come up long before the French eagles hovered above the sources of the Danube. But at that time the Russian vanguard had not reached Linz in Upper Austria, and not before October 10th did it appear on the banks of the River Inn.[1]

Far from being the last to move, the French Emperor outstripped his enemies in the speed of his preparations.

[1] See "Paget Papers," vol. ii., p. 224; also Schönhal's "Der Krieg 1805 in Deutschland," p. 67.

Whereas the Austrians believed he would not be able to reach the Danube in force before November 10th, he intended to have 200,000 men in Germany by September 18th. But he knew not at first the full extent of his good fortune: it did not occur to him that the Austrians would cross the Inn: all he asks Talleyrand, on August 23rd, is that such news may appear in the "Moniteur" as will gain him twenty days and give General Bertrand time to win over Bavaria, while "I make my 200,000 men pirouette into Germany." On August 29th the *Army of England* became the *Grand Army*, composed of seven corps, led by Bernadotte, Marmont, Davoust, Soult, Lannes, Ney, and Augereau. The cavalry was assigned to Murat; while Bessières was in command of the Imperial Guard, now numbering some 10,000 men.

Already the greater part of this vast array was beginning to move inland; Davoust and Soult left some regiments, 30,000 strong, to guard the flotilla, and Marmont detached 14,000 men to defend the coasts of Holland; but the other corps on September 2nd began their march Rhinewards in almost their full strength. On that day Bernadotte broke up his cantonments in Hanover, and began his march towards the Main, on which so much was to turn. The Elector of Hesse-Cassel now espoused Napoleon's cause. Thus, without meeting any opposition, Bernadotte's columns reached Würzburg at the close of September; there the Elector of Bavaria welcomed the Marshal and gave him the support of his 20,000 troops; and at that stronghold he was also joined by Marmont.

In order to mislead the Austrians, Napoleon remained up to September 23rd at St. Cloud or Paris; and during his stay appeared a *senatus consultum* ordering that, after January 1st, 1806, France should give up its revolutionary calendar and revert to the Gregorian. He then set out for Strassburg, as though the chief blows were to be dealt through the passes of the Black Forest at the front of Mack's line of defence; and, to encourage that general in this belief, Murat received orders to show his horsemen in the passes held by Mack's outposts, but to avoid any serious engagements. This would give time for the other

corps to creep up to the enemy's rear. Mack, meanwhile, had heard of the forthcoming junction of the French and Bavarians at Würzburg, but opined that it threatened Bohemia.[1]

Accordingly, he still clung to his lines, contenting himself with sending a cavalry regiment to observe Bernadotte's movements; but neither he nor his nominal chief, the Archduke Ferdinand, divined the truth. Indeed, so far did they rely on the aid of the Russians as to order back some regiments sent from Italy by the more sagacious Archduke Charles; but 11,000 troops from Tyrol reached the Swabian army. That force was now spread out so as to hold the bridges of the Danube between Ingolstadt and Ulm; and on October 7th the Austrians were disposed as follows: 18,000 men under Kienmayer were guarding Ingolstadt, Neuburg, Donauwörth, Günzburg, and lesser points, while Mack had about 35,000 men at Ulm and along the line of the Iller; the arrival of other detachments brought the Austrian total to upwards of 70,000 men. Against this long, scattered line Napoleon led greatly superior forces.[2] The development of his plans proceeded apace. Though Prussia had proclaimed her strict neutrality, he did not scruple to violate it by sending Bernadotte's corps through her principality of Ansbach, which lay in their path. He charged Bernadotte to "offer many assurances favourable to Prussia, and testify all possible affection and respect for her — and then rapidly cross her land, asserting the impossibility of doing anything else." Accordingly, that Marshal was lavish in his regrets and apologies, but ordered his columns to defile past the battalions and squadrons of Prussia, that were powerless to resent the outrage.[3]

[1] "Corresp." No. 9249. See too No. 9254 for the details of the enveloping moves which Napoleon then (September 22nd) accurately planned twenty-five days before the final blows were dealt: yet No. 9299 shows that, even on September 30th, he believed Mack would hurry back to the Inn. Beer, p. 145.

[2] Rüstow, "Der Krieg 1805." Hormayr, "Geschichte Hofers" (vol. i., p. 96), states that, in framing with Russia the plan of campaign, the Austrians forgot to allow for the difference (twelve days) between the Russian and Gregorian calendars. The Russians certainly were eleven days late.

[3] "Corresp.," No. 9319; Sir G. Jackson's "Diaries," vol. i., p. 334.

The news of this trespass on Prussian territory reached the ears of Frederick William at a critical time, when the Czar sent to Berlin a kind of ultimatum, intimating that, even if Prussia deserted the cause of European independence, Russian troops must nevertheless pass through part of Prussian Poland. Stung by this note from his usually passive demeanour, the King sent off an answer that such a step would entail a Franco-Prussian alliance against the violators of his territory, when the news came that Napoleon had actually done at Ansbach what Alexander had announced his intention of doing in the east. The revulsion of feeling was violent: for a short space the King declared he would dismiss Duroc and make war on Napoleon for this insult, but in the end he called a cabinet council and invited the Czar to come to Berlin.[1]

While the Gallophil counsellors, Haugwitz and Lombard, were using all their arts to hinder the Prusso-Russian understanding, the meshes were being woven fast around Mack and the Archduke Ferdinand. Bernadotte's corps, after making history in its march, was detached to the south-east so as to hold in check the Russian vanguard, and to given plenty of room to the troops that were to cut off Mack from Austria, a move which may be compared with the march of Bonaparte to Milan, before he essayed the capture of Melas. Both steps bespeak his desire to have ample space at his back before circling round his prey.

On October 6th the corps of Soult and Lannes, helped by Murat's powerful cavalry, cut the Austrian lines on the Danube at Donauwörth, and gained a firm footing on the right bank. Over the crossing thus secured far in Mack's rear, the French poured in dense array, and marched south and south-west towards the back of the Austrian positions, while Ney's corps marched to seize the chief bridges over the Danube.

A study of the processes of Mack's brain at this time is not without interest. It shows the danger of intrusting the fate of an army to a man who cannot weigh evi-

[1] *Ibid.*; also Metternich, "Mems.," vol. i., ch. iii. For Prussia's protest to Napoleon, which pulverized the French excuses, see Garden, vol. ix., p. 69.

dence. Mack was not ignorant of the course of events, though his news generally came late. The mischief was that his brain warped the news. On October 6th he wrote to Vienna that the enemy seemed about to aim a blow at his communications: on October 7th, when he heard of the loss of Donauwörth, he described it as an unfortunate event, which no one thought to be possible. The Archduke now urged the need of an immediate retreat towards Munich, and marched in an easterly direction on Günzburg: another Austrian division of 8,000 men moved on Wertingen, where, on October 8th, it was furiously attacked by the troops of Murat and Lannes. At first the Imperialists firmly kept their ranks; but the unequal contest closed with a hasty flight, which left 2,000 men in the hands of the French. Then Murat, pressing on through the woods, cut off Mack's retreat to Augsburg. Yet that general still took a cheerful view of his position. On that same day he wrote from Günzburg that, as soon as the enemy had passed over the Lech, he would cross the Danube and cut their communications at Nördlingen. He wrote thus when Ney's corps was striving to seize the Danube bridges below Ulm. If Mack were to march north-east against the French communications it was of the utmost importance for him to hold the chief of these bridges: but Ney speedily seized three of them, and on the 9th was able to draw closer the toils around Ulm.

From his position at Augsburg the French Emperor now directed the final operations; and, as before Marengo, he gave most heed to that side by which he judged his enemy would strive to break through, in this case towards Kempten and Tyrol. This would doubtless have been Mack's safest course; for he was strong enough to brush aside Soult, gain Tyrol, seal up its valleys against Napoleon, and carry reinforcements to the Archduke Charles. But he was still intent on his Nördlingen scheme, even after the loss of the Danube bridges exposed his march thither to flank attacks from the four French corps now south of the river. Nevertheless, Napoleon's miscalculation of Mack's plans, or, as Thiers has striven to prove, a misunderstanding of his orders by Murat,

gave the Austrians a chance such as fortune rarely bestows.[1]

In spite of Ney's protests, one of his divisions, that led by Dupont, had been left alone to guard the northern bank of the Danube, a position where it might have been overwhelmed by an enterprising foe. What is more extraordinary, Dupont, with only 6,000 men, was charged to advance on Ulm, and carry it by storm. On the 11th he accordingly advanced against Mack's fortified camp north of that city. The Austrians met him in force, and, despite the utmost heroism of his troops, finally wrested the village of Hasslach from his grasp; later in the day a cloud of their horsemen, swooping round his right wing, cut up his tired troops, took 1,000 prisoners, and left 1,500 dead and wounded on the field. Among the booty was found a despatch of Napoleon ordering Dupont to carry Ulm by storm — which might have shown them that the French Emperor believed that city to be all but deserted.[2] In truth, Napoleon's miscalculation opened for Mack a path of safety; and had he at once marched away to the north, the whole aspect of affairs might have changed. The Russian vanguard was on the banks of the Inn: all the French, except the relics of Dupont's division, were south of the Danube, and a few vigorous blows at their communications might have greatly embarrassed troops that had little artillery, light stores of ammunition, and lived almost entirely on the produce of the country. We may picture to ourselves the fierce blows that, in such a case, Frederick the Great would have rained on his assailants as he wheeled round on their rear and turned their turning movements. With Frederick matched against Napoleon, the Lech and the Danube would have witnessed a very cyclone of war.

But Mack was not Frederick: and he had to do with a foe who speedily made good an error. On October 13th, when Mack seemed about to cut off the French from the Main, he received news through Napoleon's spies that the English had effected a landing at Boulogne, and a revolu-

[1] Schönhals; Ségur, ch. xvi., exculpates Murat and Ney.

[2] Schönhals, p. 73. Thiers states that Dupont's 6,000 gained a victory over 25,000 Austrians detached from the 60,000 who occupied Ulm!

tion had broken out in France. The tidings found easy entrance into a brain that had a strange bias towards pleasing falsities and rejected disagreeable facts. At once he leaped to the conclusion that the moves of Soult, Murat, Lannes, Marmont, and Ney round his rear were merely desperate efforts to cut back a way to Alsace. He therefore held fast to his lines, made only feeble efforts to clear the northern road, and despatched reinforcements to Memmingen. The next day brought other news; that Memmingen had been invested by Soult; that Ney by a brilliant dash across the Danube at Elchingen had routed an Austrian division there, and was threatening Ulm from the north-east; and that the other French columns were advancing from the south-east. Yet Mack, still viewing these facts in the twilight of his own fancies, pictured them as the efforts of despair, not as the drawing in of the hunter's toils.

He was now almost alone in his reading of events. The Archduke Ferdinand, though nominally in supreme command, had hitherto deferred to Mack's age and experience, as the Emperor Francis enjoined. But he now urged the need of instantly marching away to the north with all available forces. Still Mack clung to his notion that it was the French who were in sore straits; and he forbade the evacuation of Ulm; whereupon the Archduke, with Schwarzenberg, Kollowrath, Gyulai, and all whose instincts or rank prompted and enabled them to defy the madman's authority, assembled 1,500 horsemen and rode off by the northern road. It was high time; for Ney, firmly established at Elchingen, was pushing on his vanguard towards the doomed city: Murat and Lannes were charged to support him on the north bank, while across the river Marmont, and further south Soult, cut off the retreat on Tyrol.

At last the scales fell from Mack's eyes. Even now he protested against the mere mention of surrender. But again he was disappointed. Ney stormed the Michaelsberg north of Ulm, a position on which the Austrians had counted; and on October 17th the hapless commander agreed to terms of capitulation, whereby his troops were to march out and lay down their arms in six days' time,

if an Austro-Russian army able to raise the siege did not come on the scene. These conditions were afterwards altered by the captor, who, wheedling his captive with a few bland words, persuaded him to surrender on the 20th on condition that Ney and his corps remained before Ulm until the 25th. This was Mack's last offence against his country and his profession; his assent to this wily compromise at once set free the other French corps for offensive operations; and that too when every day was precious to Austria, Russia, and Prussia.

On October 20th the French Emperor, with a brilliant staff, backed by the solid wall of his Guard and flanked by eight columns of his troops, received the homage of the vanquished. First came their commander, who, bowed down by grief, handed his sword to the victor with the words, "Here is the unfortunate Mack." Then there filed out to the foot of the Michaelsberg 20,000 foot and 3,000 horse, who laid down their arms before the Emperor, some with defiant rage, the most part in stolid dejection, while others flung them away with every sign of indecent joy.[1] As if the elements themselves conspired to enhance the brilliance of Napoleon's triumph, the sun, which had been obscured for days by storm-clouds and torrents of rain, now shone brightly forth, bathing the scene in the mild radiance of autumn, lighting up the French forces disposed on the slopes of that natural amphitheatre, while it cast deep shadows from the long trail of the vanquished beneath. The French were electrified by the sight: the fatigues of their forced marches through the dusty heats of September, and the slush, swamps, and torrents of the last few days were all forgotten, and they hailed with jubilant shouts the chief whose sagacity had planned and achieved a triumph hitherto unequalled in the annals of war. "Our Emperor," said they, "has found out a new way of making war: he no longer makes it with our arms, but with our legs."[2]

[1] Marmont, vol. ii., p. 320; Lejeune, "Memoirs," vol. i., ch. iii.

[2] Thiers, bk. xxii. During Mack's interview with Napoleon (see "Paget Papers," vol. ii., p. 235), when the Emperor asked him why he did not cut his way through to Ansbach, he replied, "Prussia would have declared against us." To which the Emperor retorted: "Ah! the Prussians do not declare so quickly."

Meanwhile the other Austrian detachments were being hunted down. Only a few men escaped from Memmingen into Tyrol; the division, which, if properly supported, might have cut a way through to Nördlingen three days earlier, was now overwhelmed by the troops of Murat and Lannes; out of 13,000 foot-soldiers very few escaped. Most of the horsemen succeeded in joining the Archduke Ferdinand, on whose track Murat now flung himself with untiring energy. The *beau sabreur* swept through part of Ansbach in pursuit, came up with Ferdinand near Nuremberg, and defeated his squadrons, their chief, with about 1,700 horse and some 500 mounted artillerymen, finally reaching the shelter of the Bohemian Mountains. All the rest of Mack's great array had been engulfed.

Thus closed the first scene of the War of the Third Coalition. Hasty preparations, rash plans, and, above all, Mack's fatal ingenuity in reading his notions into facts — these were the causes of a disaster which ruined the chances of the allies. The Archduke Charles, who had been foiled by Masséna's stubborn defence, was at once recalled from Italy in order to cover Vienna; and, worst of all, the Court of Berlin now delayed drawing the sword.

Yet, even amidst the unstinted boons that she showered on Napoleon by land, Fortune rudely baffled him at sea. When he was hurrying from Ulm towards the River Inn, to carry the war into Austria, he heard that the French navy had been shattered. Trafalgar was fought the day after Mack's army filed out of Ulm. The greatest sea-fight of the century was the outcome of Napoleon's desire that his ships should carry succour to his troops in Italy. For this voyage the Emperor was about to substitute Admiral Rosily for Villeneuve: and the unfortunate admiral, divining that resolve, sought by a bold stroke to retrieve his fortunes. He put to sea, and Trafalgar was the result. It would be superfluous to describe this last and most splendid of Nelson's exploits; but a few words as to the bearing of this great victory on the events of that time may not be out of place. It is certain that Villeneuve at Trafalgar fought under more favourable conditions than in the conflict of July 22nd. He had landed his very numerous sick, his crews had been

refreshed and reinforced, and, above all, the worst of the Spanish ships had been replaced by seaworthy and serviceable craft. Yet out of the thirty-three sail of the line, he lost eighteen to an enemy that numbered only twenty-seven sail; and that fact alone absolves him from the charge of cowardice in declining to face Cornwallis and Calder in July with ships that were cumbered with sick and badly needed refitting.

Then again: it is often stated that Trafalgar saved England from invasion. To refute this error it is merely needful to remind the reader that all immediate fear of invasion was over, when, at the close of August, Napoleon wheeled the Grand Army against Austria. Not until the Continent was conquered could the landing in Kent become practicable. That opportunity occurred two years later, after Tilsit; then, in truth, the United Kingdom was free from panic because Trafalgar had practically destroyed the French navy. For these islands, then, the benefits of Trafalgar were prospective. But, for the British Empire, they were immediate. Every French, Dutch, and Spanish colony that now fell into our hands was in great measure the fruit of Nelson's victory, which heralded the second and vaster stage of imperial growth.

Finally, the decisive advantage which Britain now gained over Napoleon at sea compelled him, if he would realize the world-wide schemes ever closest to his heart, to adopt the method of warfare against us which he had all along contemplated as an effective alternative. As far back as February, 1798, he pointed out that there were three ways of attacking and ruining England: either a direct invasion, or a French control of North Germany which would ruin British commerce, or an expedition to the Indies. After Trafalgar the first of these alternatives was impossible, and the last receded for a time into the background. The second now took the first place in his thoughts; he could only bring England to his feet and gain a world-empire by shutting out her goods from the whole of the Continent, and thus condemning her to industrial strangulation. In a word, Trafalgar necessitated the adoption of the Continental System, which was built up by the events now to be described.

CHAPTER XXIII

AUSTERLITZ

After the capitulation of Ulm, the French Emperor marched against the Russian army, which, as he told his troops, *English gold had brought from the ends of the earth.* As is generally the case with coalitions, neither of the allies was ready in time or sent its full quota. In place of the 54,000 which Alexander had covenanted to send to Austria's support, he sent as yet only 46,000; and of these 8,000 were detached into Podolia in order to watch the warlike moves of the Turks, whom the French had stirred up against the Muscovite.

But Alexander had another and weightier excuse for not denuding his realm of troops, namely, the ambiguous policy of Prussia. Up to the middle of October this great military Power clung to her somewhat threatening neutrality, an attitude not unlike that of the Scandinavian States, which, in 1691, remained deaf to the entreaties of William of Orange to take up the cause of European freedom against Louis XIV., and were dubbed the Third Party. It would seem, however, that the Prussian King had some grounds for his conduct: he feared the Polish influence which Czartoryski wielded over the Czar, and saw in the Russian request for a right of way through Prussian Poland a deep-laid scheme for the seizure of that territory. Indeed, the letters of Czartoryski prove that such a plan was pressed forward, and found much favour with the Czar, though at the last moment he prudently shelved it.[1]

For a time the hesitations of Prussia were ended by Napoleon's violation at Ansbach, and by Alexander's frank explanations at Potsdam; but meanwhile the delays caused by Prussia's suspicions had marred the Aus-

[1] "Alexandre I et Czartoryski," pp. 32–34.

trian plans. A week's grace granted by Napoleon, or a week gained by the Russians on their actual marching time, would have altered the whole situation in Bavaria —and Prussia would have drawn the sword against France to avenge the insult at Ansbach.

On October 10th Hardenberg informed the Austrian ambassador, Metternich, that Frederick William was on the point of declaring for the allies. Nothing, however, was done until Alexander reached Potsdam, and the first news that he received on his arrival (October 25th) was of the surrender of Ulm. Nevertheless, the influence of the Czar checkmated the efforts of Haugwitz and the French party, and kept that Government to its resolve, which on November 3rd took the form of the Treaty of Potsdam between Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Frederick William pledged himself to offer the armed mediation of Prussia, and, if it were refused by Napoleon, to join the allies. The Prussian demands were as follows: the restoration of the King of Sardinia; the independence of Naples, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland; and the Mincio as Austria's boundary in Italy.[1]

An envoy was to offer these terms to Napoleon, and to bring back a definite answer within one month from the time of his departure, and in the meantime 180,000 Prussians prepared to threaten his flank and rear. Alexander also secretly pledged himself to use his influence with George III. to gain Hanover for Frederick William at the close of the war, England meanwhile subsidizing Prussia and her Saxon allies on the usual scale. The Czar afterwards accompanied the King and Queen to the crypt of the Great Frederick, kissed the tomb, and, as he took his leave of their majesties, cast a significant look at the altar.[2]

Did he fear the peace-loving tendencies of the King, or the treachery of Haugwitz? It is difficult to see good faith in every detail of the treaty. Apart from the

[1] See these terms compared with the Anglo-Russian treaty of April 11th, 1805, in the Appendix of Dr. Hansing's "Hardenberg und die dritte Coalition" (Berlin, 1899).

[2] Häusser, vol. ii., p. 617 (4th edit.); Lettow-Vorbeck, "Der Krieg von 1806–1807," vol. i., *ad init.*

strange assumption that England would subsidize Prussia and also give up Hanover, the manner in which the armed mediation was to be offered left several loopholes for escape. After the surrender of Ulm, speedy and vigorous action was needed to restore the balance; yet a month's delay was bargained for. Then, too, Haugwitz, who was charged with this most important mission, deferred his departure for ten days on the plea that Prussia's forces could not be ready before the middle of December. Such was the statement of the leisurely Duke of Brunswick; but it can scarcely be reconciled with Frederick William's threat, a month earlier, of immediate war against the Russians if they entered his lands. Yet now that monarch approved of the delay. Haugwitz therefore did not set out till November 14th, and by that time Napoleon was master of Vienna, and the allies were falling back into Moravia.

We now turn to the scene of war. For the first time in modern history the Hapsburg capital had fallen into the hands of a foreign foe. Napoleon now installed himself at the stately palace of Schönbrunn, while Francis was fleeing to Olmütz and the Archdukes Charles and John were struggling in the defiles of the Alps to disengage themselves from the vanguard of Masséna. The march of the French on Vienna, and thence northwards to Brünn, led to only one incident of general interest, namely, the filching away from the Austrians of the bridge over the Danube to the north of Vienna. As it nears the city, that great river spreads out into several channels, the largest being on the north. The wooden bridge further up the river having been burnt by the Russian rearguard, there remained only the bridge or bridges, opposite the city, on the possession of which Napoleon set much store. He therefore charged Murat and Lannes to secure them if possible.

Murat was smarting under the Emperor's displeasure for a rash advance on Vienna which had wellnigh cost the existence of Mortier's corps on the other bank. Indeed, only by the most resolute bravery did the remnant of that corps hew its way through overwhelming numbers. Murat, who should have kept closely in touch with Mortier

by a flotilla of boats, was eager to retrieve his fault, and, with Lannes, Bertrand, and an officer of engineers, he now approached the first part of the bridge as if for a parley during an informal armistice which had just been discussed but not concluded. The French Marshals had disposed the grenadiers of General Oudinot, a body of men as renowned as their leader for fighting qualities, behind some thickets that spread along the southern bank and partly screened the approach. The plank barricade at the southern end was now thrown down, and the four Frenchmen advanced. An Austrian mounted sentinel fired his carbine and galloped away to the main bridge; thereupon the four men advanced, called to the officer there in command as if for a parley, and stopped him in the act of firing the gunpowder stored beneath the bridge, with the assurance that an armistice was, or was about to be, concluded.

Reaching the northern end, they repeated their tale, and claimed to see the commander. While the defenders were hesitating, Oudinot's grenadiers were rapidly marching forward. As soon as they were seen, the Austrians prepared once more to fire the bridge. Again they were implored to desist, as peace was as good as signed. But when the grenadiers had reached the northern bank, the mask was dropped: fresh troops were hurrying up and the chance of saving the bridge from their grasp was now lost. By these means did Murat and Lannes secure an undisputed passage to the northern bank, for which four years later the French had desperately to fight. Napoleon was delighted at Murat's exploit, which greatly furthered his pursuit of the allies, and he at once restored that Marshal to high favour. But those who placed gentlemanly conduct above the glamour of a trickster's success were not slow, even then, to express their disapproval of this act of perfidy.[1]

The prolonged retreat into Moravia, the unexpected feebleness of the Hapsburg arms, and the lack of supplies weighed heavily on Alexander's spirits, as is shown in his letter from Olmütz to the King of Prussia on Novem-

[1] For the much more venial stratagem which Kutusoff played on Murat at Hollabrunn, see Thiers, bk. xxiii.

ber 19th: "Our position is more than critical: we stand almost alone against the French, who are close on our heels. As for the Austrian army, it does not exist. . . . If your armies advance, the whole position will alter at once."[1] A few days later, however, when 27,000 more Russians were at hand, including his Imperial Guard, the Czar passed from the depths of depression to the heights of confidence. The caution of his wary commander, Kutusoff, who urged a Fabian policy of delay and retreat, now began to weary him. To retire into northern Hungary seemed ignominious. And though Frederick William held to his resolve of not drawing the sword before December 15th, and by that time the Archduke Charles with a large army was expected below Vienna, yet the susceptible young autocrat spurned the behests of irksome prudence. In vain did Kutusoff and Schwarzenberg urge the need of delay and retreat: Alexander gave more heed to the rash counsels of his younger officers. An advance was ordered on Brünn, and a successful cavalry skirmish at Wischau confirmed the Czar in his change from the strategy of Fabius to that of Varro.

Napoleon, who was now at Brünn, had already divined this change in the temper of his foe, and called back his men with the express purpose of humouring Alexander's latest mood and tempting him on to a decisive battle. He saw clearly the advantage of fighting at once. The renewed offers of an armistice, which he received from the prudent Francis, might alone have convinced him of this; and they came in time to give him an argument, telling enough to daunt the Prussian envoy, who was now drawing near to his headquarters.

After proceeding towards Vienna and being sent back to Brünn, Haugwitz arrived there on November 29th.[2] Of the four hours' private conference that ensued with Napoleon we have but scanty records, and those by Haug-

[1] Lord Harrowby, then on a special mission to Berlin, reports (November 24th) that this appeal of the Czar had been "coolly received," and no Prussian troops would enter Bohemia until it was known how Prussia's envoy to Napoleon, Count Haugwitz, had been received.

[2] Thiers says December 1st, which is corrected by Napoleon's letter of November 30th to Talleyrand.

witz himself, who had every reason for warping the truth. He states that he was received with icy coldness, and at once saw that the least threat of hostile pressure by Prussia would drive Napoleon to make a separate peace with Austria. But after the first hour the Emperor appeared to thaw: he discussed the question of a Continental peace and laid aside all resentment at Prussia's conduct: finally, he gave a general assent to her proposals, on two conditions, namely, that the allied force then in Hanover should not be allowed by Prussia to invade Holland, and that the French garrison in the fortress of Hameln, now compassed about by Prussians, should be provisioned. To both of these requests Haugwitz assented, and pledged the word of his King, an act of presumption which that monarch was to repudiate.

While exceeding his instructions on this side, Haugwitz did practically nothing to advance the chief business of his mission. Either his own fears, or the crafty mixture of threats and flattery that cajoled so many envoys, led him to neglect the interests of Prussia, and to play into the hands of the very man whose ambition he was sent to check. After the interview, when the envoy had retired to his lodging, Caulaincourt came up in haste to warn him that a battle was imminent, that his personal safety might be endangered, and that Napoleon requested him to repair to Vienna, where he might consult with Talleyrand on affairs of State. Horses and an escort were ready, and Haugwitz set out for that city, where he arrived on November 30th, only to find that Talleyrand was strictly forbidden to do more than entertain him with commonplaces. Thus, the all-important question as to the action of Prussia's legions was again postponed, even when 150,000 Prussians and Saxons were ready to march against the French communications.

Napoleon's letter of November 30th to Talleyrand reveals his secret anxiety at this time. In truth, the crisis was terrible. With a superior force in front, with the Archdukes Ferdinand and Charles threatening to raise Bohemia and Hungary on his flanks, while two Prussian armies were about to throw themselves on his rear, his position was fully as serious as that of Hannibal before

Cannæ, from which the Carthaginian only freed himself by that staggering blow. Did that example inspire the French Emperor, or did he take counsel from his own boundless resources of brain and will? Certain it is that, after a passing fit of discouragement, he braced himself for a final effort, and staked all on the effect of one mighty stroke. In order to hurry on the battle he feigned discouragement and withdrew his lines from Austerlitz to the Goldbach. Already he had sent General Savary to the Czar with proposals for a short truce.[1] The word truce now spelt guile; its offer through Savary, whose hands were stained with the blood of the Duc d'Enghien, was in itself an insult, and Alexander gave that envoy the coolest reception. In return he sent Prince Dolgoruki, the leader of the bellicose youths now high in favour, who proudly declared to the French Emperor the wishes of his master for the independence of Europe — adding among other things that Holland must be free and have Belgium added to it.

This suggestion greatly amused Napoleon, who replied that Russia ought now to think of her own advantages on the side of Turkey. The answer convinced the Czar that Napoleon dreaded a conflict in his dangerously advanced position. He knew not his antagonist's resources. Napoleon had hurried up every available regiment. Bernadotte's corps was recalled from the frontier of Bohemia; Friant's division of 4,000 men was ordered up from Vienna; and by forced marches it also was nigh at hand on the night of December 1st, worn with fatigue after covering an immense space in two days, but ready to do excellent service on the morrow.[2] By this timely concentration Napoleon raised his forces to a total of at least 73,000 men, while the enemy founded their plan on the assumption that Napoleon had less than 50,000, and would scarcely resist the onset of superior forces.

Their plan was rash, even for an army which numbered about 80,000 men. The Austrian General Weyrother had convinced the Czar that an energetic advance of his left

[1] Thiébault, vol. ii., ch. viii.; Ségur, ch. xviii.; York von Wartenburg, "Nap. als Feldherr," vol. i., p. 230.

[2] Davoust's reports of December 2nd and 5th in his "Corresp."

wing, which rested on the southern spurs of the Pratzenberg, would force back Napoleon's right, which was ranged between the villages of Kobelnitz and Sokelnitz, and so roll up his long line that stretched beyond Schlapanitz. This move, if successful, would not only win the day, but decide the campaign, by cutting off the French from their supplies coming from the south and driving them into the exhausted lands around Olmütz. Such was Weyrother's scheme, which enchanted the Czar and moved the fears of the veteran Kutusoff: it was expounded to the Russian and Austrian generals after midnight on December the 2nd. Strong in the great central hill, the Pratzenberg, and the cover of its village at the foot, the Czar had no fear for his centre: to his right or northern wing he gave still less heed, as it rested firmly on villages and was powerful in cavalry and artillery; but his left wing, comprising fully two-fifths of the allied army, was expected easily to defeat Napoleon's weak and scattered right, and so decide the day. Kutusoff saw the peril of massing so great a force there and weakening the centre, but sadly held his peace.

Napoleon had already divined their secret. In his order of battle he took his troops into his confidence, telling them that, while the enemy marched to turn his right, they would expose their flank to his blows. To announce this beforehand was strangely bold, and it has been thought that he had the plan from some traitor on the enemy's staff. No proof of this has been given; and such an explanation seems superfluous to those who have observed Napoleon's uncanny power of fathoming his adversary's designs. The idea of withdrawing one wing in order to tempt the foe unduly to prolong his line on that side, and then to crush it at the centre, or sever it from the centre, is common both to Castiglione and Austerlitz. It is true, the peculiarities of the ground, the ardour of the Russian attack, and the vastness of the operations lent to the present conflict a splendour and a horror which Castiglione lacked. But the tactics which won both battles were fundamentally the same.

He had studied the ground in front of Austerlitz; and the priceless gift of strategic imagination revealed to him

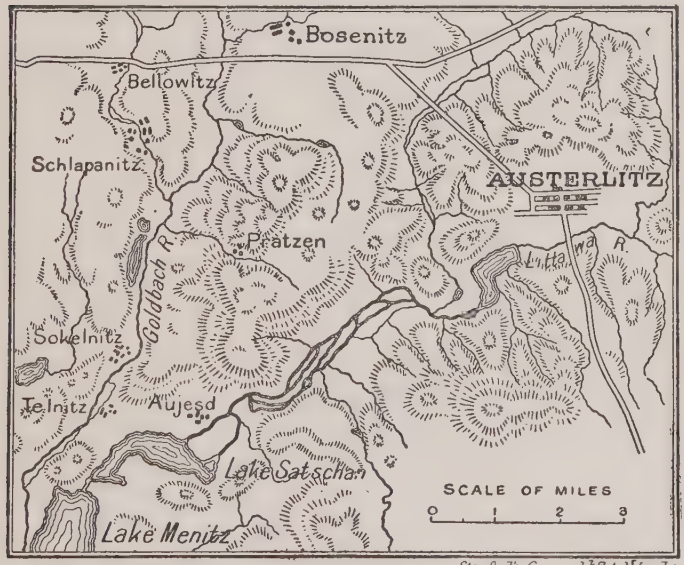
what a rash and showy leader would be certain to do on that ground;[1] he tempted him to it, and the announcement of the enemy's plan to the French soldiery supplied the touch of good comradeship which insured their utmost devotion on the morrow. At midnight, as he returned from visiting the outposts, the soldiers greeted him with a weird illumination: by a common impulse they tore down the straw from their rude shelters and held aloft the burning wisps on long poles, dancing the while in honour of the short gray-coated figure, and shouting, "It is the anniversary of the coronation. Long live the Emperor." Thus was the great day ushered in. The welkin glowed with this tribute of an army's hero-worship: the frost-laden clouds echoed back the multitudinous acclaim; and the Russians, as they swung forward their left, surmised that, after all, the French would stand their ground and fight, whilst others saw in the flare a signal that Napoleon was once more about to retreat.

December the 2nd may well be the most famous day of the Napoleonic calendar: it was the day of his coronation, it was the day of Austerlitz, and, a generation later, another Napoleon chose it for his *coup d'état*. The "sun of Austerlitz," which the nephew then hailed, looked down on a spectacle far different from that which he wished to gild with borrowed splendour. Struggling dimly through dense banks of mist, it shone on the faces of 73,000 Frenchmen resolved to conquer or to die: it cast weird shadows before the gray columns of Russia and the white-coats of Austria as they pressed in serried ranks towards the frozen swamps of the Goldbach. At first the allies found little opposition; and Kienmayer's horse cleared the French from Tellnitz and the level ground beyond. But Friant's division, hurrying up from the west, restored the fight and drove the first assailants from the village. Others, however, were pressing on, twenty-nine battalions strong, and not all the tenacious bravery of Davoust's soldiery availed to hold that spot. Nor was it necessary. Napoleon's plan was to let the allied left compromise

[1] Ségur, Thiébault, and Lejeune all state that Napoleon in the previous advance northwards had foretold that a great battle would soon be fought opposite Austerlitz, and explained how he would fight it.

itself on this side, while he rained the decisive blows at its joint with the centre on the southern spur of the Pratzenberg.

For this reason he reduced Davoust to defensive tactics, for which his stubborn methodical genius eminently fitted him, until the French centre had forced the Russians from the plateau. Opposite or near that height he had posted the corps of Soult and Bernadotte, supporting them with the grenadiers of Oudinot and the Imperial



Guard. Confronting these imposing forces was the Russian centre, weakened by the heavy drafts sent towards Tellnitz, but strong in its position and in the experience of its leader Kutusoff. Caution urged him to hold back his men to the last moment, until the need of giving cohesion to the turning movement led the Czar impatiently to order his advance. Scarcely had the Russians descended beyond Pratzen when they were exposed to a furious attack. Vandamme, noted even then as one of the hardest hitters in the army, was leading his division

of Soult's corps up the northern slopes of the plateau ; by a sidelong slant his men cut off a detachment of Russians in the village, and, aided by the brigade of Thiébault, swarmed up the hill at a speed which surprised and unsteadied its defenders. Oudinot's grenadiers and the Imperial Guard were ready to sustain Soult : but the men of his corps had the glory of seizing the plateau and driving back the Russians. Yet these returned to the charge. Alexander and Kutusoff saw the importance of the heights, and brought up a great part of their reserves. Soon the divisions of Vandamme and St. Hilaire were borne back ; and it needed all the grand fighting powers of their troops to hold up against the masses of howling Russians. For two hours the battle there swayed to and fro; and Thiébault has censured Napoleon for the lack of support, and Soult for his apathy, during this soldiers' battle.

But the Emperor was awaiting the development of events on the wings. A sharp fight of all arms was raging on the plain further to the north. There the allies at first gained ground, the Austrian horse well maintaining its old fame : but the infantry of Lannes' corps, supported by powerful artillery ranged on a small conical hill, speedily checked their charges ; the French horse, marshalled by Murat and Kellermann somewhat after the fashion of the British cavalry at Waterloo, so as to support the squares and dash through the intervals in pursuit, soon made most effective charges upon the dense squadrons of the allies, and finally a general advance of Lannes and Murat overthrew the wavering lines opposite and chased them back towards the small town of Austerlitz.

Thus by noon the lines of fighting swerved till they ranged along the course of the Littawa stream, save where the allies had thrust forward a long and apparently successful wedge beyond Tellnitz. The Czar saw the danger of this almost isolated wing, and sought to keep touch with it ; but the defects of the allied plan were now painfully apparent. Napoleon, having the interior lines, while his foes were scattered over an irregular arc, could reinforce his hard-pressed right. There Davoust was being

slowly borne back, when the march of Duroc with part of the Imperial Guard restored the balance on that side. The French centre also was strengthened by the timely arrival of part of Bernadotte's corps. That Marshal detached a division towards the northern slopes of the plateau; for he divined that there his master would need every man to deal the final blows.[1]

In truth, Alexander and Kutusoff were struggling hard to regain the Pratzenberg. Four times did the Muscovites fling themselves on the French centre, and not without some passing gleams of success. Here occurred the most famous cavalry fight of the war. The Russian Guards, mounted on superb horses, had cut up two of Vandamme's battalions, when Rapp rode to their rescue with the chasseurs of the French Imperial Guard. These choice bodies of horsemen met with a terrible shock, which threw the Russians into disorder. Rallied by other squadrons, these now overthrew their assailants and seemed about to overpower them, when Bessières with the heavy cavalry of the Guard fell on the flank of the Muscovite horse and drove their lines, horse and foot, into the valley beyond.

Assured of his centre, Napoleon now launched Soult's corps down the south-western spurs of the plateau upon the flank and rear of the allied left: this unexpected onset was decisive: the French, sweeping down the slopes with triumphant shouts, cut off several battalions on the banks of the Goldbach, scattered others in headlong flight towards Brünn, and drove the greater part down to the Lake of Tellnitz. Here the troubles of the allies culminated. A few gained the narrow marshy gap between the two lakes; but dense bodies found no means of escape save the frozen surface of the upper lake. In some parts the ice bore the weight of the fugitives; but where they thronged pell-mell, or where it was cut up by the plunging fire of the French cannon on the heights, crowds of men sank to destruction. The victors themselves stood

[1] Thiébault wrongly attributes this succour to Lannes: for that marshal, who had just insulted and challenged Soult, Thiébault had a manifest partiality. Savary, though hostile to Bernadotte, gives him bare justice on this move.

aghast at this spectacle; and, for the credit of human nature be it said, many sought to save their drowning foes. Among others, the youthful Marbot swam to a floe to help bring a Russian officer to land, a chivalrous exploit which called forth the praise of Napoleon. The Emperor brought this glorious day to a fitting close by visiting the ground most thickly strewn with his wounded, and giving directions for their treatment or removal. As if satisfied with the victory, he gave little heed to the pursuit. In truth, never since Marlborough cut the Franco-Bavarian army in twain at Blenheim, had there been a battle so terrible in its finale, and so decisive in its results as this of the three Emperors, which cost the allies 33,000 men and 186 cannon.

The Emperors Alexander and Francis fled eastwards into the night. Between them there was now a tacit understanding that the campaign was at an end. On that night Francis sent proposals for a truce; and in two days' time Napoleon agreed to an armistice (signed on December 6th) on condition that Francis would send away the Russian army and entirely exclude that of Prussia from his territories. A contribution of 100,000,000 francs was also laid upon the Hapsburg dominions. On the next day Alexander pledged himself to withdraw his army at once; and Francis proceeded to treat for peace with Napoleon. This was an infraction of the treaties of the Third Coalition, which prescribed that no separate peace should be made.

Under the circumstances, the conduct of the Hapsburgs was pardonable: but the seeming break-up of the coalition furnished the Court of Berlin with a good reason for declining to bear the burden alone. It was not Austerlitz that daunted Frederick William; for, after hearing of that disaster, he wrote that he would be true to his pledge given on November 3rd. But then, on the decisive day (December 15th), came the news of the defection of Austria, the withdrawal of Alexander's army, and the closing of the Hapsburg lands to a Prussian force. These facts absolved Frederick William from his obligations to those Powers, and allowed him with perfect good faith to keep his sword in the scabbard. The change, it is true, sadly

dulled the warlike ardour of his army; but it could not be called desertion of Russia and Austria.[1] The disgrace came later, when, on Christmas Day, Haugwitz reached Berlin, and described to the King and Ministers his interview with Napoleon in the palace of Schönbrunn, and the treaty which the victor then and there offered to Prussia at the sword's point.

For most men a great victory such as Austerlitz would have brought a brief spell of rest, especially after the ceaseless toils and anxieties of the previous fortnight. Yet now, after ridding himself of all fear of Austria, Napoleon at once used every device of his subtle statecraft to dissolve the nascent coalition. And Fortune had willed that, when flushed with triumph, he should have to deal with a timorous time-server.

It is the curse of a policy of keeping up a dainty balance in a hurricane that it unmans the balancer, until at last the peacemaker resembles a juggler. A decade of compromise and evasion of difficulties had enfeebled the spirit of Prussia, until the hardest trial for her King was to take any step that could not be retraced. He had often spoken "feelingly, if not energetically," of the predicaments of his position between France, England, and Russia.[2] And, as in the case of that other *bon père de famille*, Louis XVI., whom Nature framed for a farm-house and Fate tossed into a revolution, his lack of foresight and resolution took the heart out of his advisers and turned statesmen into trimmers. Even before the news of Austerlitz reached the ears of Talleyrand and Haugwitz at Vienna, the bearer of Prussia's ultimatum was posing as the friend of France. On all occasions he wore the cordon of the Legion of Honour; and while the hosts of East and West were in the death-grapple on the Pratzenberg, he strove to convince the French Foreign Minister that the Prussians had entered Hanover only in order to keep the peace in North

[1] Harrowby evidently thought that Prussia's conduct would depend on events. Just before the news of Austerlitz arrived, he wrote to Downing Street: "The eyes of this Government are turned almost exclusively on Moravia. It is there the fate of this negotiation must be decided." Yet he reports that 192,000 Prussians are under arms ("F. O.," Prussia, No. 70).

[2] Jackson, "Diaries," vol. i., p. 137.

Germany; that, as Russians had traversed Prussian territory, the French would, of course, be equally free to do so; that Frederick William objected to the descent of any English force in Hanover, which belonged *de facto* to France; and finally that the Treaty of Potsdam was not a treaty at all, but merely a declaration with the "offer of Prussia's good offices and of mediation, but without any mingling of hostile intentions." Well might Talleyrand write to Napoleon: "I am very satisfied with M. Haugwitz."[1]

Napoleon's victory over Prussian diplomacy was therefore won, even before the lightning-stroke of Austerlitz blasted the Third Coalition. Haugwitz began his conference with the victor at Schönbrunn on December 13th, by offering Frederick William's congratulations on his triumph at Austerlitz, to which the Emperor replied by a sarcastic query whether, if the result of that battle had been different, he would have spoken at all about the friendship of his master.[2] After thus disconcerting the envoy and upbraiding him with the Treaty of Potsdam, Napoleon unmasked his battery by offering Prussia the Electorate of Hanover in return for the comparatively petty sacrifices of Ansbach to Bavaria, and Cleves and Neufchâtel to France. For the loss of these outlying districts Prussia could buy that long-coveted land.[3] The envoy was dazzled by this glittering offer, and by others that followed. The conqueror proposed an offensive and defensive alliance, whereby France and Prussia mutually guaranteed their lands along with prospective additions in Germany and Italy; and the Court of Berlin was also to uphold the independence of Turkey.

Such were the terms that Napoleon peremptorily required Haugwitz to sign within a few hours: and the bearer of Prussia's ultimatum on December 15th signed this Treaty of Schönbrunn, which degraded the would-be arbitress of

[1] Lettres inédites de Talleyrand," pp. 205–208.

[2] Metternich, "Mems.," vol. i., ch. iii.

[3] Hanover, along with a few districts of Bavarian Franconia, would bring to Prussia a gain of 989,000 inhabitants, while she would lose only 375,000. Neufchâtel had offered itself to Frederick I. of Prussia in 1688, and its proposed barter to France troubled Hardenberg ("Mems.," vol. ii., p. 421).

Europe to her former position of well-fed follower of France. This was the news which Haugwitz brought back to his astonished King. His reception was of the coolest; for Frederick William was an honest man, who sought peace, prosperity, and the welfare of his people, and now saw himself confronted by the alternative of war or national humiliation. In truth, every turn and double of his course was now leading him deeper into the discredit and ruin which will be described in the next chapter.

Leaving for the present that unhappy King amidst his increasing perplexities, we return to the affairs of Austria. Mack's disaster alone had cast that Government into the depths of despair, and we learn from Lord Gower, our ambassador at St. Petersburg, that he had seen copies of letters written by the Emperor Francis to Napoleon "couched in terms of humility and submission unworthy of a great monarch," to which the latter replied in a tone of superiority and affected commiseration, and with a demand for the Hapsburg lands in Venetia and Swabia.[1]

The same tone of whining dejection was kept up by Cobenzl and other Austrian Ministers, even before Austerlitz, when Prussia was on the point of drawing the sword; and they sent offers of peace, when it was rather for their foe to sue for it. After that battle, and, still more so after signing the armistice of December 6th, they were at the conqueror's mercy; and Napoleon knew it. After probing the inner weakness of the Berlin Court, he now pressed with merciless severity on the Hapsburgs. He proposed to tear away their Swabian and Tyrolese lands and their share of the spoils of Venice. In vain did the Austrian plenipotentiaries struggle against these harsh terms, pleading for Tyrol and Dalmatia, and pointing out the impossibility of raising 100,000,000 francs from territories ravaged by war. In vain did they proffer a claim to Hanover for one of their Archdukes: though Talleyrand urged the advantage of this step as dissolving the Anglo-Austrian alliance, yet Napoleon refused to hear of it; for at that time he was offering that Electorate to

[1] Gower to Lord Harrowby from Olmütz, November 25th, in "F. O. Records," Russia, No. 59.

Haugwitz.[1] Still less would he hear a word in favour of the Court of Naples, whose conduct had aroused his resentment. The utmost that the Austrian envoys could wring from him was the reduction of the war contribution to 40,000,000 francs.

The terms finally arranged in the Treaty of Pressburg (December 26th, 1805) may be thus summarized: Austria recognized the recent acquisitions and changes of title made by Napoleon in Italy, and ceded to him her parts of Venetia, Istria, and Dalmatia. She recognized the title of King now bestowed by Napoleon on the Electors of Bavaria and Würtemberg, a change which was not to invalidate their membership of the "Germanic Confederation." To those potentates and to the Elector (now Grand Duke) of Baden, the Hapsburgs ceded all their scattered Swabian domains, while Bavaria also gained Tyrol and Vorarlberg. As a slight compensation for these grievous losses, Austria gained Salzburg, whose Elector was to receive from Bavaria the former principality of Würzburg. The domains and revenues of the Teutonic and Maltese Orders were secularized, so as to furnish appanages to some other princes of the Hapsburg House; and another blow was dealt at the Germanic system by the declaration that Napoleon guaranteed the full and entire sovereignty of the rulers of Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden. In fact, as will appear in the next chapter, Napoleon now usurped the place in Germany previously held by the Hapsburgs, and extended his influence as far east as the River Inn, and, on the south, down to the remote city of Ragusa on the Adriatic.

But it is one thing to win a brilliant diplomatic triumph, and quite another thing to secure a firm and lasting peace. The Peace of Pressburg raised Napoleon to heights of power never dreamt of by Louis XIV.: but his pre-eminence was at best precarious. When by moderate terms he might have secured the alliance of Austria and severed her friendship with England, he chose to place his heel on her neck and drive her to secret but irreconcilable hatred.

And his choice was deliberate. Two months earlier, Talleyrand had sent him a memorandum on the subject of

[1] "Lettres inédites de Tall.," p. 216.

a Franco-Austrian alliance, which is instinct with statesmanlike foresight. He stated that there were four Great Powers — France, Great Britain, Russia, and Austria: he excluded Prussia, whose rise to greatness under Frederick the Great was but temporary. Austria, he claimed, must remain a Great Power. She had opposed revolutionary France; but with Imperial France she had no lasting quarrel. Rather did her manifest destiny clash with that of Russia on the lower Danube, where the approaching break-up of the Ottoman Power must bring those States into conflict. It was good policy, then, to give a decided but friendly turn of Hapsburg policy towards the east. Let Napoleon frankly approach the Emperor Francis and say in effect: "I never sought this war with you, but I have conquered: I wish to restore complete harmony between us: and, in order to remove all causes of dispute, you must give up your Swabian, Tyrolese, and Venetian lands: of these Tyrol shall fall to a prince of your choice, and Venice (along with Trieste and Istria) shall form an aristocratic Republic under a magistrate nominated in the first instance by me. As a set-off to these losses, you shall receive Moldavia, Wallachia, and northern Bulgaria. If the Russians object to this and attack you, I will be your ally." Such was Talleyrand's proposal.[1]

It is easy to criticise it in many details; but there can be little doubt that its adoption by Napoleon would have laid a firmer foundation for French supremacy than was afforded by the Treaties of Pressburg and Tilsit. Austria would not have been deeply wounded, as she now was by the transfer of her faithful Tyrolese to the detested rule of Bavaria, and by the undisguised triumph of Napoleon in Italy and along the Adriatic. Moreover, the erection of Tyrol and Venetia into separate States would have been a wise concession to those clannish societies; and Austria could not have taken up the championship of outraged Tyrolese sentiment, which she assumed four years later. Instead of figuring as the leader of German nationality, she would have been on the worst of terms with the Czar

[1] Printed for the first time in full in "Lettres inédites de Tall.," pp. 156–174. On December 5th Talleyrand again begged Napoleon to strengthen Austria as "a needful bulwark against the barbarians, the Russians."

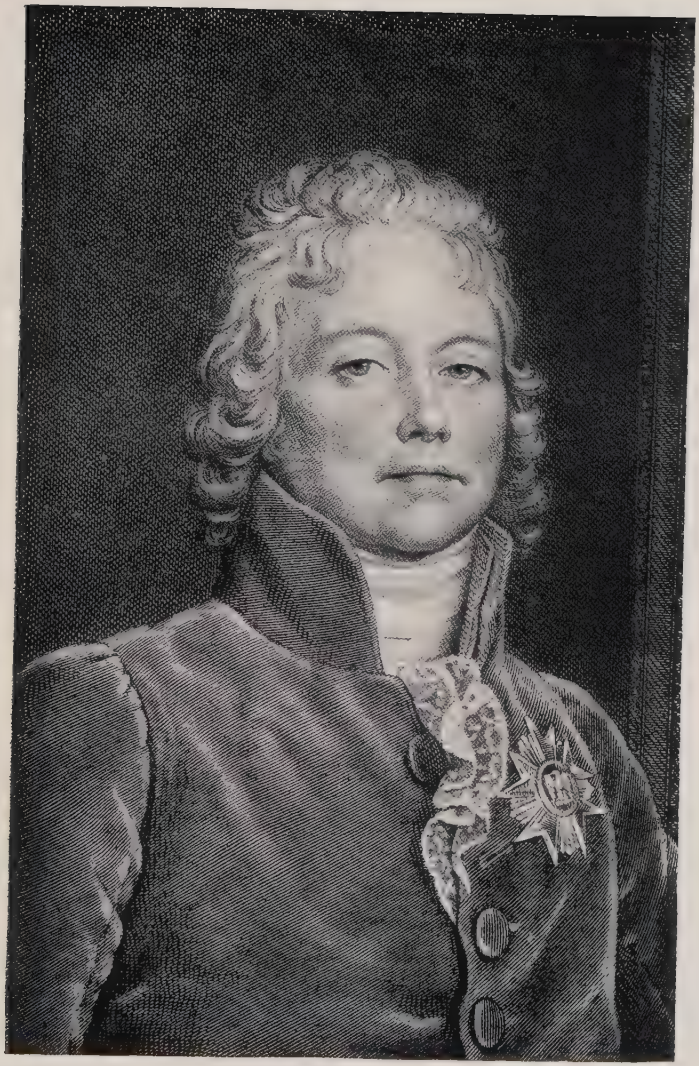
over the Eastern Question ; and their discord would have enabled France to dictate her own terms as to the partition of the Sultan's dominions. Talleyrand had no specific for dissolving the traditional friendship of England and Austria, and we may imagine the joy with which he heard from the Hapsburg envoys the demand for Hanover, at a time when English gold was pouring into the empty coffers at Vienna. Here was the sure means of embroiling England and Austria for a generation at least. But this further chance of preventing future coalitions was likewise rejected by Napoleon, who deliberately chose to make Austria a deadly foe, and to aggrandize her rival Prussia.[1]

Why did Napoleon reject Talleyrand's plan ? Unquestionably, I think, because he had resolved to build up a Continental System, which should "hermetically seal" the coasts of Europe against English commerce. If he was to realize those golden visions of his youth, ships, colonies, and an Eastern empire, which, even amidst the glories of Austerlitz, he placed far above any European triumph, he must extend his coast system and subject or conciliate the maritime States. Of these the most important were Prussia and Russia. The sea-borne commerce of Austria was insignificant, and could easily be controlled from his vassal lands of Venetia and Dalmatia. To the would-be conqueror of England the friendship or hatred of Austria seemed unimportant : he preferred to depress this now almost land-locked Power, and to draw tight the bonds of union with Prussia, always provided that she excluded British goods.[2]

The same reason led him to hope for a Russian alliance. Only by the help of Russia and Prussia could he shut England out from the Baltic ; and, to win that help, he destined Hanover for Prussia and the Danubian States for the Czar. For the founder of the Continental System such a choice was natural ; but, viewed from the standpoint of Continental politics, his treatment of Austria was

[1] I dissent, though with much diffidence, from M. Vandal ("Napoléon et Alexandre," vol. i., p. 9) in regard to Talleyrand's proposal.

[2] Napoleon to Talleyrand (December 14th, 1805): "Sûr de la Prusse, l'Autriche en passera par où je voudrai. Je ferai également prononcer la Prusse contre l'Angleterre."



TALLEYRAND.

From an engraving by Boucher-Desnoyers after a painting by Gérard.

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a serious blunder. His frightful pressure on her motley lands endowed them with a solidity which they had never known before ; and in less than four years, the conqueror had cause to regret having driven the Hapsburgs to desperation. It may even be questioned whether Austerlitz itself was not a misfortune to him. Just before that battle he thought of treating Austria leniently, taking only Verona and Legnago, and exchanging Venetia against Salzburg. This would have detached her from the Coalition, and made a friend of a Power that is naturally inclined to be conservative.

After Austerlitz, he rushed to the other extreme and forced the Hapsburgs to a hostility in which the Marie Louise marriage was only a forced and uneasy truce. His motives are not, in my judgment, to be assigned to mere lust of domination, but rather to a reasoned though exaggerated conviction of the need of Prussia and Russia to his Continental System. Above all things, he now sought to humble England, so that finally he might be free for his long-deferred Oriental enterprise. This is the irony of his career, that, though he preferred the career of Alexander the Great to that of Cæsar ; though he placed his victory at Austerlitz far below the triumph of the great Macedonian at Issus which assured the conquest of the Orient, yet he felt himself driven to the very measures which tethered him to *cette vieille Europe* and which finally roused the Continent against him.

Among his errors of judgment, assuredly his behaviour to Austria in 1805 was not the least. The recent history of Europe supplies a suggestive contrast. Two generations after Austerlitz, the Hapsburg Power was shattered by the disaster of Königgrätz, and once more lost all influence in Germany and Italy But the victor then showed consideration for the vanquished. Bismarck had pondered over the lessons of history, because, as he said, *history teaches one how far one may safely go*. He therefore persuaded King William to forego claims that would have embittered the rivalry of Prussia and Austria. Nay ! he recurred to Talleyrand's policy of encouraging the Hapsburgs to seek in the Balkan Peninsula compensation for their losses in the west : and within fifteen years the basis

of the Triple Alliance was firmly laid. Napoleon, on the other hand, for lack of that statesmanlike moderation which consecrates victory and cements the fabric of an enduring Empire, soon saw the political results of Austerlitz swept away by the rising tide of the nations' wrath. In less than nine years the Austrians and their allies were masters of Paris.

CHAPTER XXIV

PRUSSIA AND THE NEW CHARLEMAGNE

An eminent German historian, who has striven to say some kind words about Frederick William's Government before the collapse at Jena, prefaces his apology by the axiom that from a Prussian monarch one ought to expect, not French, English, or Russian policy, but only Prussian policy. The claim may well be challenged. Doubtless, there are some States concerning which it would be true. Countries such as Great Britain and Spain, whose areas are clearly defined by nature, may with advantage be self-contained until their peoples overflow into new lands: before they become world Powers, they may gain in strength by being narrowly national. But there are other States whose fortunes are widely different. They represent some principle of life or energy, in the midst of mere political wreckage. If the binding power, which built up an older organism, should decline, as happened to the Holy Roman Empire after the religious wars, fragments will fall away and join bodies to which they are now more akin.

Of the States that throve among the crumbling masses of the old Empire the chief was Brandenburg-Prussia. She had a twofold energy which the older organism lacked: she was Protestant and she was national: she championed the new creed cherished by the North Germans, and she felt, though dimly as yet, the strength that came from an almost single kin. Until she seized on part of the spoils of Poland, her Slavonic subjects were for the most part germanized Slavs; and even after acquiring Posen and Warsaw at the close of the eighteenth century, she could still claim to be the chief Germanic State. A generation earlier, Frederick the Great had seen this to be the source of her strength. His policy was not merely Prussian: in effect, if not in aim, it was German. His victory at Rossbach over a great polyglot force of French and Imperialists

first awakened German nationality to a thrill of conscious life; and the last success of his career was the championship of the lesser German princes against the encroachments of the Hapsburgs. In fact, it seems now a mere commonplace to assert that Prussia has prospered most when, as under Frederick the Great, and William the Great, her policy has been truly German, and that she has fallen back most in the years 1795–1806 and 1848–1852, when the subservience of her Frederick Williams to France and Austria has lost them the respect and support of the rest of the Fatherland. A State that would attract other fragments of the same nation must be attractive, and it must be broadly national if it is to attract. If Stein and Bismarck had been merely Prussians, if Cavour's policy had been narrowly Sardinian, would their States ever have served as the rallying centres for the Germany and Italy of to-day?

The difficulties which beset Frederick William III. in 1805 were not entirely of his own making. His predecessor of the same ill-omened name, when nearing the close of his inglorious reign, made the Peace of Basel (1795), which began to place the policy of Berlin at the beck and call of the French revolutionists. But the present ruler had assured Prussia's subservience to France at the time of the Secularizations, when he gained Erfurt, Eichsfeld, Hildesheim, Paderborn, and a great part of the straggling bishopric of Münster. Even at that time of shameless rapacity, there were those who saw that the gain of half a million of subjects to Prussia was a poor return for the loss of self-respect that befell all who shared in the sacrilegious plunder bartered away by Bonaparte and Talleyrand. Frederick William III. was even suspected of a leaning towards French methods of Government; and a Prussian statesman said to the French ambassador:

"You have only the nobles against you: the King and the people are openly for France. The revolution which you have made from below upwards will be slowly effected in Prussia from above downwards: the King is a democrat after his fashion: he is always striving to curtail the privileges of the nobles, but by slow means. In a few years feudal rights will cease to exist in Prussia."[1]

[1] Report of M. Otto, August, 1799.

Could the King have carried out these much-needed reforms, he might perhaps have opposed a solid society to the renewed might of France. But he failed to set his house in order before the storm burst; and in 1803 he so far gave up his championship of North German affairs as to allow the French to occupy Hanover, a land that he and his Ministers had long coveted.

We saw in the last chapter that Hanover was the bait whereby Napoleon hooked the Prussian envoy, Haugwitz, at Schönbrunn; and that the very man who had been sent to impose Prussia's will upon the French Emperor returned to Berlin bringing peace and dishonour. The surprise and annoyance of Frederick William may be imagined. On all sides difficulties were thickening around him. Shortly before the return of Haugwitz to Berlin, the Russian troops campaigning in Hanover had been placed under the protection of Prussia; and the King himself had offered to our Minister, Lord Harrowby, to protect Cathcart's Anglo-Hanoverian corps which, *with the aid of Prussian troops*, was restoring the authority of George III. in that Electorate.

Moreover, Frederick William could not complain of any shabby treatment from our Government. Knowing that he was set on the acquisition of Hanover and could only be drawn into the Coalition by an equally attractive offer, the Pitt Ministry had proposed through Lord Harrowby the cession to Prussia at the general peace of the lands south-west of the Duchy of Cleves, "bounded by a frontier line drawn from Antwerp to Luxemburg," and connected with the rest of her territories.[1] This plan, which would have planted Prussia firmly at Antwerp, Liège, Luxemburg, and Cologne, also aimed at installing the Elector of Salzburg in the rest of the new Rhenish acquisitions of France; while the equipoise of the Powers was to be adjusted by the cession of Salzburg, the Papal Legations, and the line of the Mincio to Austria, she in her turn giving up part of her Dalmatian lands to Russia.

[1] Czartoryski ("Mems.," vol. ii., ch. xii.) states that England offered Holland to Prussia. I find no proof of this in our Records. The districts between Antwerp and Cleves are Belgian, not Dutch; and we never wavered in our support of the House of Orange.

Prussia was to be the protectress of North Germany and regard any incursion of the French, "north of the Maine or at least of the Lahn," as an act of war. Great Britain, after subsidizing Prussia for 100,000 troops on the usual scale, pledged herself to restore all her conquests made, or to be made, during the war, with the exception of the Cape of Good Hope: but no questions were to be raised about that desirable colony, or Malta, or the British maritime code.[1]

At the close of 1805, then, Frederick William was face to face with the offers of England and those brought by Haugwitz from Napoleon. That is, he had to choose between the half of Belgium and the Rhineland as offered by England, or Hanover as a gift from Napoleon. The former gain was the richer, but apparently the more risky, for it entailed the hatred of France: the latter seemed to secure the friendship of the conqueror, though at the expense of the claims of honour and a naval war with England. His confidential advisers, Lombard, Beyme, and Haugwitz, were determined to gain the Electorate, preferably at Napoleon's hands; while his Foreign Minister, Hardenberg, a Hanoverian by birth, desired to assure the union of his native land with Prussia by more honourable means, and probably by means of an exchange with George III., which will be noticed presently. In his opposition to French influence, Hardenberg had the support of the more patriotic Prussians, who sought to safeguard Prussia's honour, and to avert war with England. The difficulty in accepting the Electorate at the point of Napoleon's sword was not merely on the score of morality: it was due to the presence of a large force of English, Hanoverians, and Russians on the banks of the Weser, and to the protection which the Prussian Government had offered to those troops against any French attack, always provided that they did not move against Holland and retired behind the Prussian battalions.[2] The indignation of British

[1] These proposals, dated October 27th, 1805, were modified somewhat on the news of Mack's disaster and the Treaty of Potsdam. Hardenberg assured Harrowby (November 24th) that, despite England's liberal pecuniary help, Frederick William felt great difficulty in assenting to the proposed territorial arrangements ("F. O.," Prussia, No. 70).

[2] Hardenberg's "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 377, 382.

officers at this last order is expressed by Christian Ompteda, of the King's German Legion, in a letter to his brother at Berlin: "My dear fellow, if this sort of thing goes on, the Continent will soon be irrecoverably lost. The Russian and English armies will not long creep for refuge under the contemptible Prussian cloak. We are here, 40,000 of the best and bravest troops. A swift move on Holland only would have opened the road to certain success. . . . And this is Lombard's and Haugwitz's work!" [1]

What meanwhile were George III.'s Ministers doing? At this crisis English policy suffered a terrible blow. Death struck down the "stately column" that held up the swaying fortunes of our race. William Pitt, long failing in health, was sore-stricken by the news of Austerlitz and the defection of Austria. But the popular version as to the cause of his death — that *Austerlitz killed Pitt* — is more melodramatic than correct. Among the many causes that broke that unbending spirit, the news of the miserable result of the Hanoverian Expedition was the last and severest. The files of our Foreign Office papers yield touching proof of the hopes which the Cabinet cherished, even after Vienna was in Napoleon's hands. Harrowby was urged to do everything in his power — short of conceding Hanover — to bring Prussia into the field, in which case "nearly 300,000 men will be available in North Germany at the beginning of the next campaign, which will include 70,000 British and Hanoverian troops employed there or in maritime enterprises." [2] To this hope Pitt clung, even after hearing the news of Austerlitz, and it was doubtless this which enabled him to bear that last journey from Bath to Putney Heath, with less fatigue and far more quickly than had been expected. He arrived home on Saturday night, January 11th. On the following Wednesday his friend, George Rose, called on him and found that a serious change for the worse had set in.

"On the Sunday he was better, and continued improving till Monday in the afternoon, when Lord Castlereagh insisted on seeing him,

[1] Ompteda, p. 188. The army returned in February, 1806.
[2] "F. O.," Prussia, No. 70 (November 23rd).

and, having obtained access to him, entered (Lord Hawkesbury being also present) on points of public business of the most serious importance (principally respecting the bringing home the British troops from the Continent), which affected him visibly that evening and the next day, and this morning the effect was more plainly observed: . . . his countenance is extremely changed, his voice weak, and his body almost wasted."

It is clear also from the medical evidence which the diarist gives that the news from Hanover was the cause of this sudden change. On the previous Sunday, that is, just after the fatigue of the three days' journey, the physicians "thought there was a reasonable prospect of Mr. Pitt's recovery, that the probability was in favour of it, and that, if his complaint should not take an unfavourable turn, he might be able to attend to business in about a month."[1] That unfavourable turn took place when the heroic spirit lost all hope under the distressing news from Berlin and Hanover. Austerlitz, it is true, had depressed him. Yet that, after all, did not concern British honour and the dearest interests of his master.

But, that Frederick William, from whom he had hoped so much, to whom he was on the point of advancing a great subsidy, should now fall away, should talk of peace with Napoleon and claim Hanover, should forbid an invasion of Holland and request the British forces to evacuate North Germany — this was a blow to George III., to our military prestige, and to the now tottering Ministry. How could he face the Opposition, already wellnigh triumphant in the sad Melville business, with a King's Speech in which this was the chief news? Losing hope, he lost all hold on life: he sank rapidly: in the last hours his thoughts wandered away to Berlin and Lord Harrowby. "What is the wind?" he asked. "East; that will do; that will bring him fast," he murmured. And, on January 23rd, about half an hour before he breathed his last, the servant heard him say: "My country: oh my country."[2]

Thus sank to rest, amidst a horror of great darkness, the statesman whose noon had been calm and glorious. Only a superficial reading of his career can represent him

[1] "Diaries of Right Hon. G. Rose," vol. ii., pp. 223–224.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 233–283; Rosebery, "Life of Pitt," p. 258.

as eager for war and a foe to popular progress. His best friends knew full well his pride in the great financial achievements of 1784–6, his resolute clinging to peace in 1792, and his longing for a pacification in 1796, 1797, and 1800, provided it could be gained without detriment to our allies and to the vital interests of Britain. His defence lies buried amidst the documents of our Record Office, and has not yet fully seen the light. For he was a reserved man, the warmth of whose nature blossomed forth only to a few friends, or on such occasions as his inspired speech on the emancipation of slaves. To outsiders he had more than the usual fund of English coldness : he wrote no memoirs, he left few letters, he had scant means of influencing public opinion ; and he viewed with lofty disdain the French clamour that it was he who made and kept up the war. "I know it," he said ; "the Jacobins cry louder than we can, and make themselves heard."[1] He was, in fact, a typical champion of our rather dumb and stolid race, that plods along to the end of the appointed stage, scarcely heeding the cloud of stinging flies. Both the people and its champion were ill fitted to cope with Napoleon. None of our statesmen had the Latin tact and the histrionic gifts needful to fathom his guile, to arouse public opinion against him, or to expose his double-dealing.

But Pitt was unfortunate above all of them. It was his fate to begin his career in an age of mediocrities and to finish it in an almost single combat with the giant. He was no match for Napoleon. The Coalition, which the Czar and he did so much to form, was a house of cards that fell at the conqueror's first touch ; and the Prussian alliance now proved to be a broken reed. His notions of strategy were puerile. The French Emperor was not to be beaten by small forces tapping at his outworks ; and Austria might reasonably complain that our neglect to attack the rear of the Grand Army in Flanders exposed her to the full force of its onset on the Danube. But though his genius pales before the fiery comet of Napoleon, it shines with a clear and steady radiance when viewed beside that of the Continental statesmen of his age. They flickered for a brief space and set. His was the rare

[1] Lord Malmesbury's "Diary," vol. iv., p. 114.

virtue of dauntless courage and unswerving constancy. By the side of their wavering groups he stands forth like an Abdiel :

> "Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal:
> Nor number nor example with him wrought
> To swerve from truth or change his constant mind,
> Though single."

While English statesmanship was essaying the task of forming a Coalition Ministry under Fox and Grenville, Napoleon with untiring activity was consolidating his position in Germany, Italy, and France. In Germany he allied his family by marriage with the now royal Houses of Bavaria and Würtemberg. He chased the Bourbons of Naples from their Continental domains. In France he found means to mitigate a severe financial crisis, and to strengthen his throne by a new order of hereditary nobility. In a word, he became the new Charlemagne.

The exaltation of the South German dynasties had long been a favourite project with Napoleon, who saw in the hatred of the House of Bavaria for Austria a sure basis for spreading French influence into the heart of Germany. Not long after the battle of Austerlitz, the Elector of Bavaria, while out shooting, received from a French courier a letter directed to "Sa Majesté *le Roi* de Bavière et de Suabe."[1] This letter was despatched six days after a formal request was sent through Duroc, that the Elector would give his daughter Augusta in marriage to Eugène Beauharnais. The affair had been mooted in October : it was clinched by the victory of Austerlitz ; and after Napoleon's arrival at Munich on the last day of the year, the final details were arranged. The bridegroom was informed of it in the following laconic style : "I have arrived at Munich. I have arranged your marriage with the Princess Augusta. It has been announced. This morning the princess visited me, and I spoke with her for a long time. She is very pretty. You will find herewith her portrait on a cup ; but she is much better looking." The wedding took place at Munich as soon as the bridegroom could cross

[1] Letter of December 27th, 1805 ; Jackson, "Diaries," vol. ii., p. 387.

the Alps; and Napoleon delayed his departure for France in order to witness the ceremony which linked him with an old reigning family. At the same time he arranged a match between Jerome Bonaparte and Princess Catherine of Würtemberg. This was less expeditious, partly because, in the case of a Bonaparte, Napoleon judged it needful to sound the measure of his obedience. But Jerome had been broken in: he had thrown over Miss Paterson, and, after a delay of a year and a half, obeyed his brother's behests, and strengthened the ties connecting Swabia with France. A third alliance was cemented by the marriage of the heir to the Grand Duchy of Baden with Stéphanie de Beauharnais, niece of Josephine.

In the early part of 1806 Napoleon might flatter himself with his brilliant success as a match-maker. Yet, after all, he was less concerned with the affairs of Hymen than with those of Mars and Mercury. He longed to be at Paris for the settlement of finances; and he burned to hear of the expulsion of the Bourbons from Naples. For this last he had already sent forth his imperious mandates from Vienna; and, after a brief sojourn at the Swabian capitals, he set out for Paris, where he arrived incognito at midnight of January 26th. During his absence of one hundred and twenty-five days he had captured or destroyed two armies, stricken a mighty coalition to the heart, shattered the Hapsburg Power, and revolutionized the Germanic system by establishing two Napoleonic kingdoms in its midst.

Yet, as if nothing had been done, and all his hopes and thoughts lay in the future, he summoned his financial advisers to a council for eight o'clock in the morning. Scarcely did he deign to notice their congratulations on his triumphs. "We have," he said, "to deal with more serious questions: it seems that the greatest dangers of the State were not in Austria: let us hear the report of the Minister of the Treasury." It then appeared that Barbé-Marbois had been concerned in risky financial concerns with the Court of Spain, through a man named Ouvrard. The Minister therefore was promptly dismissed, and Mollien then and there received his post. The new Minister states in his memoirs that the money, which had sufficed to carry the French armies from the English Channel to

the Rhine, had been raised on extravagant terms, largely on loans on the national domains. In fact, it had been an open question whether victory would come promptly enough to avert a wholesale crash at Paris.

So bad were the finances that, though 40,000,000 francs were poured every year into France as subsidies from Italy and Spain, yet loans of 120,000,000 francs had been incurred in order to meet current expenses.[1] It would exceed the limits of our space to describe by what forceful means Napoleon restored the financial equilibrium and assuaged the commercial crisis resulting from the war with England. Mollien soon had reason to know that, so far from avoiding Continental wars, the Emperor thenceforth seemed almost to provoke them, and that the motto — *War must support war* — fell far short of the truth. Napoleon's wars, always excepting his war with England, supported the burdens of an armed peace. In this respect his easy and gainful triumph over Austria was a disaster for France and Europe. It beckoned him on to Jena and Tilsit.

While reducing his finances to order and newspaper editors to servility, the conqueror received news of the triumph of his arms in Southern Italy. There the Bourbons of Naples had mortally offended him. After concluding a convention for the peaceable withdrawal of St. Cyr's corps and the strict observance of neutrality by the kingdom of Naples, Ferdinand IV. and his Queen Caroline welcomed the arrival at their capital of an Anglo-Russian force of 20,000 men, and intrusted the command of these and of the Neapolitan troops to General Lacy.[2] This force, it is true, did little except weaken the northward march of Masséna; but the violation of neutrality by the Bourbons galled Napoleon. At Vienna he refused to listen to the timid pleading of the Hapsburgs on their behalf, and as soon as peace was signed at Pressburg he put forth a bulletin stating that St. Cyr was marching on Naples to hurl

[1] Mollien, "Mems.," vol. i., *ad fin.*, and vol. ii., p. 80, for the budget of 1806; also, Fiévée, "Mes Relations avec Bonaparte," vol. ii., pp. 180–203.

[2] The Court of Naples asserted that in the Convention with France its ambassador, the Comte de Gallo, exceeded his powers in promising neutrality. See Lucchesini's conversation with Gentz, quoted by Garden, "Traités," vol. x., p. 129.

from the throne that guilty woman who had so flagrantly violated all that is sacred among men. France would fight for thirty years rather than pardon her atrocious act of perfidy: the Queen of Naples had ceased to reign: let her go to London and form a committee of sympathetic ink with Drake, Spencer-Smith, Taylor, and Wickham.

This diatribe was not the first occasion on which the conqueror had proved that he was no gentleman. In his brutal letter of January 2nd, 1805, to Queen Caroline, he told her that, if she was the cause of another war, she and her children would beg their bread all through Europe. That and similar outbursts afford some excuse for the conduct of the Bourbons in the autumn of 1805. They infringed the neutrality which their ambassador had engaged to observe: but it is to be remembered that Napoleon's invasion of the Neapolitan States in 1803 was a gross violation of international law, which the French Foreign Office sought to cloak by fabricating two secret articles of the Treaty of Amiens.[1] And though troth should doubtless be kept, even with a law-breaker, yet its violation becomes venial when the latter adopts the tone of a bully. For the present he triumphed. Joseph Bonaparte invaded Naples in force, and on January 13th the King, Queen, and Court set sail for Palermo. The Anglo-Russian divisions re-embarked and sailed away for Malta and Corfu. One of the Neapolitan strongholds, Gaëta, held out till the middle of July. Elsewhere the Bourbon troops gave little trouble.

The conquest of Naples enabled Napoleon to extend his experiment of a federation of Bonapartist Kings. He announced to Miot de Melito, now appointed one of Joseph's administrators, his intentions in an interview at the Tuileries on January 28th. Joseph was to be King of Naples, if he accepted the honour quickly. If not, the Emperor would adopt a son, as in the case of Eugène, and make him King. — "I don't need a wife to have an heir. It is by my pen that I get children." — But Joseph must also show himself worthy of the honour. Let him despise fatigue, get wounded, break a leg.

[1] See my article in the "Eng. Hist. Rev.," April, 1900.

"Look at me. The recent campaign, agitation, and movement have made me fat. I believe that if all the kings coalesced against me, I should get a quite ridiculous stomach. . . . You have heard my words. I can no longer have relatives in obscurity. Those who will not rise with me, shall no longer be of my family. I am making a family of kings attached to my federative system."[1]

The threat having had its effect, Joseph was proclaimed King of Naples by a decree of Napoleon. "Keep a firm hand: I only ask one thing of you: be entirely the master there."[2] Such was the advice given to his amiable brother, who after enjoying a military promenade southwards was charged to undertake the conquest of Sicily. It mattered little that the overthrow of the Neapolitan Bourbons offended the Czar, who had undertaken the protection of that House.

As though intent on browbeating Alexander by an exhibition of his power, Napoleon lavished Italian titles on his Marshals and statesmen. Talleyrand became Prince of Benevento; and Bernadotte, Prince of Ponte-Corvo (two Papal enclaves in Neapolitan soil). To these and other titles were attached large domains (not divisible at death), which enabled his paladins and their successors to support their new dignities with pomp and splendour; especially was this so with the two titles which his bargains with Prussia and Bavaria enabled him to bestow. Thanks to the complaisance of their Kings, the Grand Duchy of Berg and Cleves was granted to Murat, while the energetic and trusty Berthier was rewarded with the Principality of Neufchâtel and a truly princely fortune.[3]

Thus was founded the Napoleonic nobility; and thus was fulfilled Mme. de Staël's prophecy that the priests and nobles would be the *caryatides* of the future throne. The change was brought about skilfully. It took place when pride in Napoleon's exploits was at its height, and when the "Gazette de France" asserted:

[1] Ducasse, "Les Rois Frères de Napoléon," p. 11.

[2] Letter of February 7th, 1806. On the same day he blames Junot, then commander of Parma, for too great lenience to some rebels near that city. The Italians were a false people, who only respected a strong Government. Let him, then, burn two large villages so that no trace remained, shoot the priest of one village, and send three or four hundred of the guilty to the galleys. "Trust my old experience of the Italians."

[3] For a list of the chief Napoleonic titles, see Appendix, *ad fin.*

"France is henceforth the arbitress of Europe. . . . Civilization would have perished in Europe, if forth from the ruins there had not arisen one of these men before whom the world keeps silence, and to whom Providence seems to intrust its destinies."[1]

This adulation, which recalls that of the Court of Augustus or Tiberius, gives the measure of French thought. In truth, Napoleon showed profound insight into human nature when he judged the hatred of an order of nobility to be a mere passing spasm of revolutionary fever; and he evinced equal good sense in restoring that order through the chiefs of the one truly popular institution in France, the army. Besides, the new titles were not taken from French domains, which would have revived the idea of feudal dependence in France: they were the fruit of Napoleon's great victory; and the sound of distant names like Benevento, Berg, and Dalmatia skilfully flattered the pride of *la grande nation*.

It is now time to return to the affairs of Prussia and to point out the chief stages in her downward course. On January 3rd, 1806, an important State Council was held at Berlin in order to decide on certain modifications to the Schönbrunn Treaty with Napoleon. The chief change resolved on was as follows: Instead of the cessions of territory being immediate and absolute, as proposed by Napoleon, they were not to take effect before the general peace. Until that took place, Frederick William resolved to occupy Hanover provisionally, meanwhile answering to France for the tranquillity of the north of Germany.[2] The Prussian Government therefore gave strong hints that the presence of a British force there was objectionable, and the troops were withdrawn.[3]

Napoleon was to be less pliable. And yet Haugwitz assured the Prussian King and council that he had looked Napoleon through and through, and had discerned an unexpressed wish to deal easily with Prussia. As to his acceptance of these changes in the Schönbrunn Treaty,

[1] January 2nd, 1802; so too Fiévée, "Mes Relations avec Bonaparte," vol. ii., p. 210, who notes that, by founding an order of nobility, Napoleon ended his own isolation and attached to his interests a powerful landed caste.

[2] Hardenberg's "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 390–394.

[3] Hardenberg to Harrowby on January 7th, "Prussia," No. 70.

Haugwitz felt no doubt whatever, at least so his foe, Hardenberg, states. But the Prussian Ministers were now proposing, not the offensive and defensive treaty of alliance that Napoleon required, but rather a mediation for peace between France and England. They were, in fact, striving to steer halfway between Napoleon and George III. — and gain Hanover. Verily, here was a belief in half measures passing that of women.

The envoy despatched to assure Napoleon's assent to these new conditions was the very man who had quailed before the Emperor at Schönbrunn. Count Haugwitz set out on January 14th for Munich and thence for Paris ; but long before any definite news was received from him, the Court of Berlin decided, on the strength of a few oily compliments from the French ambassador, Laforest, to regard the acceptance of Napoleon as fully assured. Accordingly, on January 24th, the Government resolved to place the Prussian army on a peace-footing and recall the troops from Franconia, as a daily saving of 100,000 thalers might thereby be effected. Never was there a greater act of extravagance. As soon as the retreat and demobilizing of the Prussian forces was announced, the French troops in Bavaria and Franconia began to press forward, while others poured across the Rhine. Affecting to ignore these threatening moves, the Prussian Court strove peaceably to acquire Hanover by secretly offering George III. a re-arrangement of territories, whereby the Hanoverian lands east of the Weser, along with a few districts west of Hameln and Nienburg, should pass to Prussia. Frederick William proposed to keep Minden and Ravensburg, but to cede East Frisia and all the rest of his Westphalian possessions to King George, who would retain the electoral dignity for these new lands.[1] The only reply that our ruler deigned to this offer was that he trusted :

"His Prussian Majesty will follow the honourable dictates of his own heart, and will demonstrate to the world that he will not set the

[1] I have not found a copy of this project ; but in "Prussia," No. 70 (forwarded by Jackson on January 27th, 1806), there is a detailed "Mémoire explicatif," whence I extract these details, as yet unpublished, I believe. Neither Hardenberg, Garden, Jackson, nor Paget mentions them.

dreadful example of indemnifying himself at the expense of a third party, whose sentiments and conduct towards him and his subjects have been uniformly friendly and pacifick."[1]

But by the close of February this appeal fell on deaf ears. Frederick William had decided to comply with Napoleon's terms and was about to take formal possession of Hanover.

The conqueror was far from taking that easy view of the changes made in the Schönbrunn Treaty which the discerning Haugwitz had trustfully expected. At first, every effort was made by Talleyrand to delay his interview with the Emperor, evidently in the hope that the subtle flattery of Laforest at Berlin would lead to the demobilization of the Prussian forces. This fatal step was known at Paris before February 6th, when Haugwitz was received by the Emperor; and the knowledge that Prussia was at his mercy decided the conqueror's tone. He began by some wheedling words as to the ability shown by Haugwitz in the Schönbrunn negotiation:

"If anyone but myself had treated with you I should have thought him bought over by you; but, let me confess to you, the treaty was due to your talents and merit. You were in my eyes the first statesman in Europe, and covered yourself with immortal glory."

Before that interview, forsooth, he had decided to make war on Prussia; and only Haugwitz had induced him to offer her peace and the gift of Hanover. Why, then, had that treaty been so criticised at Berlin? Why had the French ambassador been slighted? Why was Hardenberg high in favour? Why had not the King dismissed that tool of England? Here the envoy strove to stem the rising torrent of the Emperor's wrath; his words were at once swept aside; and the deluge flowed on. As Prussia had not ratified the treaty pure and simple, she was in a state of war with France; for she still had Russian and English troops on her soil. Here again Haugwitz observed that those forces were withdrawing, and that the Prussians were entering Hanover in force. The storm burst forth anew. What right had Prussia thus to carry into effect a treaty which she had not

[1] Records, "Prussia," No. 70, dated February 21st.

ratified? If her forces entered Hanover, his troops should forthwith occupy Ansbach, Cleves, and Neufchâtel: if Frederick William meant to have Hanover, he should pay dearly for it. But he would allow Haugwitz to see Talleyrand, so as to prevent an immediate war.[1]

The calm of the Foreign Minister was as dangerous as the bluster of the Emperor. Talleyrand was no friend to Prussia. He had long known Napoleon's determination to press on a war between England and Prussia, and he lent himself to the plan of undermining the Hohenzollerns. The scales now fell from the envoy's eyes. He saw that his country stood friendless before an exacting creditor, who now claimed further sacrifices — or Prussia's life-blood. The Emperor's threats were partly fictitious; and when Haugwitz was thoroughly frightened and ready to concede almost anything, Napoleon came to the real point at issue, and demanded that the whole of the German coast-line on the North Sea should be closed to English commerce. With this stringent clause superadded, Hanover was now handed over to Prussia. Never was a Greek gift more skilfully offered. The present of Hanover on those terms implied for the recipient Russia's disapproval and the hostility of England.[2]

This was the news brought by Haugwitz to Berlin. Frederick William was now on the horns of the very dilemma which he had sought to avoid. Either he must accept Napoleon's terms, or defy the conqueror to almost single combat. The irony of his position was now painfully apparent. In his longing for peace and retrenchment he had dismissed his would-be allies, and had sent his own soldiers grumbling to their homes. Moreover, he was tied by his previous action. If he accepted

[1] Hardenberg, "Mems.," vol. ii., pp. 463–469; "Nap. Corresp.," No. 9742, for Napoleon's thoughts as to peace, when he heard of Fox being our Foreign Minister.

[2] See "Nap. Corresp.," Nos. 9742, 9773, 9777, for his views as to the weakness of England and Prussia. This treaty of February 15th, 1806, confirmed the session of Neufchâtel and Cleves to France, and of Ansbach to Bavaria, but did not cede any Franconian districts to Prussia's Baireuth lands. See Hardenberg, "Mémoires," vol. ii., p. 483, for the text of the treaty.

peace from Napoleon at Christmas, when 300,000 men could have disputed the victor's laurels, how much more must he accept it now! He not only gave way on this point: he even complied with Napoleon's wishes by keeping Hardenberg at a distance. He did not dismiss him —the friendship of the spirited Queen Louisa forbade that: but Hardenberg yielded up to Haugwitz the guidance of foreign affairs, and was granted unlimited leave of absence.

Popular feeling was deeply moved by this craven compliance with French behests. The officers of the Berlin garrison serenaded the patriotic statesman, while Haugwitz twice had his windows smashed. Public opinion, it is true, counted for little in Prussia. The rigorous separation of classes, the absence of popular education, the complete subjection of the journals to Government, and the mutual jealousy of soldiers and civilians, prevented any general expression of opinion in that almost feudal society.

But when the people of Ansbach piteously begged not to be handed over to Bavaria, and forthwith saw their land occupied by the French before Prussia had ratified the cession of that principality; when the North Germans found that the gain of Hanover by Prussia was at the price of war with England and the ruin of their commerce; when it was seen that Frederick William and Haugwitz had clipped the wings of the Prussian eagle till it shunned a fight with the Gallic cock, a feeling of shame and indignation arose which proved that the limits of endurance had been reached. Observers saw that, after all, the old German feeling was not dead; it was only torpid; and forces were beginning to work which threatened ruin to the Hohenzollerns if they again tarnished the national honour.[1]

Meanwhile the first overtures for peace were exchanged between Paris, London, and St. Petersburg. In the spring

[1] The strange perversity of Haugwitz is nowhere more shown than in his self-congratulation at the omission of the adjectives *offensive et défensive* from the new treaty of alliance between France and Prussia (Hardenberg, vol. ii., p. 481). Napoleon was now not pledged to help Prussia in the war which George III. declared against her on April 20th.

of 1806 there seemed some ground for hope that Europe might find repose, at least on land, after fourteen years of almost constant war. France was no longer Jacobinical. Under Napoleon she had quickly fallen into line with the monarchical States, and the questions now at stake merely related to boundaries and the balance of power. The bellicose ardour of the Czar had melted away at Austerlitz. The seizure of Hanover by Prussia moved him but little, and he sought to compose the resulting strife. As for the other Powers, they were either helpless or torpid. The King of Sweden was venting his spleen upon Prussia. Italy, South Germany, Holland, and Spain were at Napoleon's beck; and the policy of England under the new Grenville-Fox Ministry inclined strongly towards peace. There seemed, then, every chance of founding the supremacy of France upon lasting foundations, if the claims of Britain and Austria received reasonable satisfaction. Napoleon also seems to have wanted peace for the consolidation of his power in Europe and the extension of his colonies and commerce. As at the close of all his land campaigns, his thoughts turned to the East, and on January 31st, 1806, he issued orders to Decrès which, far from showing any despair as to the French navy, foreshadowed a vigorous naval and colonial policy; while his moves on the Dalmatian coast, and the despatch of Sebastiani on a mission to the Porte, revealed the magnetic attraction which the Levant still had for him.

A peculiar interest therefore attaches to the negotiations for peace in 1806, especially as they were pushed on by that generous orator, Fox, who had so long pleaded for a good understanding with France. On February 20th, 1806, he disclosed to Talleyrand the details of a supposed plot for the murder of the French Emperor, which some person had proposed to him, an offer which he rejected with horror, at the same time ordering the man to be expelled from the kingdom. It is more than probable that the whole thing was got up by the French police as a test of the esteem which Fox had always expressed for Bonaparte.

The experiment having turned out well, Talleyrand assured Fox of the pacific desires of the French Emperor

as recently stated to the *Corps Législatif*, namely, that peace could be had on the terms of the Treaty of Amiens. Fox at once clasped the outstretched hand, but stated that the negotiations must be in concert with Russia, and the treaty such as our allies could honourably accept. To this Talleyrand, on April 1st, gave a partial assent, adding that Napoleon was convinced that the rupture of the Peace of Amiens was due solely to the refusal of France to grant a treaty of commerce. France and England could now come to satisfactory terms, if England would be content with the sovereignty of the seas, and not interfere with Continental affairs.[1] France desired, not a truce, but a durable peace.

To this Fox assented, but traversed the French claim that Russia's participation would imply her mediation. Peace could only come from an honourable understanding between all the Powers actually at war. Talleyrand denied that Russia was at war with France, as the Third Coalition had lapsed ; but Fox held his ground, and declared there must be peace with England *and Russia*, or not at all : otherwise France would be seen to aim at "excluding us from any connection with the Continental Powers of Europe."[2]

Such a beginning was disappointing : it showed that Napoleon and Talleyrand were intent on sowing distrust between England and Russia, who were mutually pledged not to make peace separately ; and for a time all overtures ceased between London and Paris, until it was known that a Russian envoy was going to Paris. Hitherto the French Foreign Office had won brilliant successes by skilfully separating and embittering allies. But now it seemed that their tactics were foiled. Two firm and trusty allies yet remained, Britain and Russia. To Czartoryski our Foreign Minister had expressed his desire that the former offensive alliance should now take a solely defensive character : "If we cannot reduce the

[1] It is noteworthy that in all the negotiations that followed, Napoleon never raised any question about our exacting maritime code, which proves how hollow were his diatribes against the tyrant of the seas at other times.

[2] Despatch of April 20th, 1806, in Papers presented to Parliament on December 22nd, 1806.

enormous power of France, it will always be something to stop its progress." To these opinions the Russian Minister gave a cordial assent, and despatched a special envoy to London to concert terms of peace along with the British Ministry, while Oubril, "a safe man on whose prudence and principles the two allied Courts may safely rely," was despatched to Vienna and Paris.[1]

Oubril proceeded to Vienna, where he had long discussions with the British and French ambassadors: Fox also requested that Lord Yarmouth, one of the many hundreds of Englishmen still kept under restraint in France, might have his freedom and repair at once to Paris for a preliminary discussion with Talleyrand. The request being granted, the prisoner left the depot at Verdun, and, early in June, saw that Minister in his first flush of pride at the new title of Prince of Benevento. At that time Paris was intoxicated with Napoleon's glory. The French were lords of Franconia, whence they levied heavy exactions: in Italy they defied the Pope's authority.[2] They were firmly installed at Ancona, despite repeated protests of Pius VII. King Joseph with an army of 45,000 men was planning the expulsion of the Bourbons from Sicily. And in these early days of June, Louis Bonaparte was declared King of Holland.

Yet Talleyrand was not so dazzled by this splendour as to slight the idea of peace with England; and when Lord Yarmouth stated that George III. would above all things require the restoration of Hanover, the Minister, after a delay in which he consulted his master, stated that that would make no difficulty. As to the other questions, namely Sicily and the maintenance of the Turkish Empire, he replied: "You hold Sicily, we do not ask it of you: if we possessed it, it might much increase our difficulties"; and as regards Turkey he advised that England should speedily gain the guarantee of its integrity from France — "for much is being prepared, but nothing is yet done." After reporting these views at Downing Street, Lord Yarmouth returned to Paris for further discussions,

[1] Czartoryski's "Mems.," vol. ii., ch. xiii.

[2] "I do not intend the Court of Rome to mix any more in politics" (Nap. to the Pope, February 13th, 1806).

with the general understanding that the principle of *uti possidetis* should form their basis — except as regards Hanover. He now was informed by Talleyrand that the negotiations with Russia were to be kept separate, and that Napoleon had other views about Sicily, as he looked on its conquest as necessary for Joseph's security on the mainland.

Surprised at this change, our envoy stated that he could not discuss any terms of peace in which Sicily was not kept for the Bourbons ; whereupon Talleyrand replied that things were altered, and that we ought to be content with regaining Hanover from Prussia and keeping Malta and the Cape of Good Hope. On Lord Yarmouth declining to proceed further until the French claims to Sicily were renounced, the offer of the Hanse Towns (Lübeck, Hamburg, and Bremen) was made for his Sicilian Majesty ; and on the refusal of that bait, Dalmatia, Ragusa, and Albania were proposed.

As Napoleon had offered to guarantee the integrity of the Turkish Empire, Lord Yarmouth showed some indignation at a proposal which would have begun its partition ; and, but for the expected arrival of Oubril, would have broken off the negotiation. On July 8th he saw the Russian envoy and found him a man of straw. Oubril approved everything. He was glad that France would give back Hanover to England, because that would sever the Franco-Prussian union and make the Court of Berlin dependent on Russia. He even thought it might be well for the Hanse Towns to go to the Neapolitan Bourbons, provided those towns were placed under the Czar's protection. But even better was the proposal that those Bourbons should have Dalmatia and neighbouring lands ; for that would drive a wedge between Napoleon and Turkey. Such was the gist of this curious interview. Desirous of testing the accuracy of his account of it, Lord Yarmouth read it over to Oubril at their next interview, when the Russian envoy added the following written corrections :

"N.B. M. d'Oubril believes, though he has no directions on this subject, that it would be suitable to Russia, and even advantageous for the assuring their own independence, that Hamburg and Lübeck should pass under the suzerainty of Russia. — N.B. Although M.

d'Oubril has a positive order to insist on the preservation of Sicily for the King of Naples, yet he is of opinion that the acquisition of Venetia, Istria, Dalmatia, and Albania" [should be an establishment for his Sicilian Majesty].[1]

That a reed shaken by every breeze should bow before Napoleon's will was not surprising; and late at night on July 20th Lord Yarmouth heard that the Russian envoy had just signed a separate peace with France, whereby the independence of the Ionian Isles was recognized (Russia keeping only 4,000 troops in Corfu), and Germany was to be evacuated by the French. But the sting was in the tail: for a secret article stipulated that Ferdinand IV. should cede Sicily to Joseph Bonaparte and receive the Balearic Isles from Napoleon's ally, Spain.

Such was the news which our envoy heard, after forcing his way to Oubril's presence, just as the latter was hurrying off to St. Petersburg. At that city an important change had taken place; Czartoryski had retired in favour of Baron Budberg, who was less favourable to a close alliance with England; and it appears certain that Oubril would not have broken through his instructions had he not known of this change. What other motives led him to break faith with England, Sicily, and Spain are not clearly known. He claimed that the new order of things in Germany rendered it highly important to get the French troops out of that land. Doubtless this was so; but even that benefit would have been dearly bought at the price of disgrace to the Czar.[2]

[1] I translate literally these N.B.'s as pasted in at the end of Yarmouth's Memoir of July 8th ("France," No. 73). As Oubril's instructions have never, I believe, been published, the passage given above is somewhat important as proving how completely he exceeded his powers in bartering away Sicily. The text of the Oubril Treaty is given by De Clercq, vol. ii., p. 180. The secret articles required Russia to help France in inducing the Court of Madrid to cede the Balearic Isles to the Prince Royal of Naples; the dethroned King and Queen were not to reside there, and Russia was to recognize Joseph Bonaparte as King of the Two Sicilies.

[2] In conversing with our ambassador, Mr. Stuart, Baron Budberg excused Oubril's conduct on the ground of his nervousness under the threats of the French plenipotentiary, General Clarke, who scarcely let him speak, and darkly hinted at many other changes that must ensue if Russia did not make peace; Switzerland was to be annexed, Germany overrun, and Turkey partitioned. That Clarke was a master in diplomatic hectoring is well known; but, from private inquiries, Stuart discovered

Leaving for the present Oubril to face his indignant master, we turn to notice an epoch-making change, the details of which were settled at Paris in the midst of the negotiations with England and Russia. On July 12th was quietly signed the Act of the Confederation of the Rhine, that destroyed the old Germanic Empire.

Some such event had long been expected. The Holy Roman Empire, after a thousand years of life, had been stricken unto death at Austerlitz. The seizure of Hanover by Prussia had led the King of Sweden to declare that he, for his Pomeranian lands, would take no more share in the deliberations of the senile Diet at Ratisbon which took no notice of that outrage. Moreover, Ratisbon was now merely the second city of Bavaria, whose King might easily deny to that body its local habitation; and the use of the term Germanic Confederation in the Treaty of Pressburg sounded the death-knell of an Empire which Voltaire with equal wit and truth had described as neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire. In the new age of trenchant realities how could that venerable figment survive — where the election of the Emperor was a sham, his coronation a mere parade of tattered robes before a crowd of landless Serenities, and where the Diet was largely concerned with regulating the claims of the envoys of princes to sit on seats of red cloth or on the less honourable green cloth, or with apportioning the traditional thirty-seven dishes of the imperial banquet so that the last should be borne by a Westphalian envoy?[1]

Among these spectral survivals of an outworn life the incursion of Napoleon across the Rhine had aroused a panic not unlike that which the sturdy form of Æneas cast on the gibbering shades of the Greeks in the mourning fields of Hades. And when, on August 1st, 1806, the heir to the Revolution notified to the Diet at Ratisbon that neither he nor the States of South and Central Ger-

that the Czar, in his private conference with Oubril, seemed more inclined towards peace than Czartoryski: when therefore the latter resigned, Oubril might well give way before Clarke's bluster. (Stuart's Despatch of August 9th, 1806, F. O., Russia, No. 63; also see Czartoryski's "Mems.," vol. ii., ch. xiv.; and Martens, "Traités," Suppl. vol. iv.)

[1] "Memoirs of Karl Heinrich, Knight of Lang."

many any longer recognized the existence of the old Empire, feebler protests arose than came from the straining throats of the scared comrades of Agamemnon. The Diet itself uttered no audible sound. The Emperor, Francis II., forthwith declared that he laid down his crown, absolved all the electors and princes from their allegiance, and retired within the bounds of the Austrian Empire.

Thus feebly flickered out the light which had shed splendour on mediæval Christendom. Kindled in the basilica of St. Peter's on Christmas Day of the year 800 in an almost mystical union of spiritual and earthly power, by the blessing of Pope Leo on Karl the Great, it was now trodden under foot by the chief of a more than Frankish State, who aspired to unquestioned sway over a dominion as great as that of the mediæval hero. For Napoleon, as Protector of the Rhenish Confederation, now controlled most of the German lands that acknowledged Charlemagne, while his hold on Italy was immeasurably stronger. Further parallels between two ages and systems so unlike as those of Charlemagne and his imitator are of course superficial; and Napoleon's attempt at impressing the imagination of the Germans seems to us to smack of unreality. Yet we must remember that they were then the most impressionable and docile of nations, that his attempt was made with much skill, and that none of the appointed guardians of the old Empire raised a voice in protest while he imposed a constitution on the sixteen Princes of the new Confederation.

They included the rulers of South Germany, as well as Dalberg the Arch-Chancellor, who now took the title of Prince Primate, the Grand-Duke of Berg, the Landgrave, now Grand-Duke, of Hesse-Darmstadt, two Princes of the House of Nassau, and eight lesser potentates. The old German laws were soon abolished in favour of the *Code Napoléon*. A close offensive and defensive alliance was framed between France and these States, that were to furnish in all 63,000 troops at the bidding of the Protector. Napoleon also gained some control over their fiscal and commercial codes — an important advantage, in view of the Continental System, that was soon to take definite form.[1]

[1] Garden, vol. ix., pp. 157, 189, 255.

As a set-off to this surrender of all questions of foreign policy and many internal rights, what did these rulers receive? As happened almost uniformly in Napoleon's aggrandizements, he struck a bargain extremely serviceable to himself, less so to those whose support he sought, and in which the losses fell crushingly on the weak. His statecraft in this respect was more cynical than that of the crowned robbers who had degraded eighteenth-century politics into a game of grab. Their robberies were at least direct and straightforward. It was reserved for Napoleon at the Treaty of Campo Formio to win huge gains mostly at the expense of a weak third party, namely, Venice. He pursued the same profitable tactics in the Secularizations, when France and the greater German Powers gained enormously at the final cost of the Church lands and the little States; and now he ground up the German domains that were to cement his new Rhenish system.

There were still numbers of Imperial Counts and Knights, as well as free cities, that had not been absorbed in 1803. The survivors were now wiped out by Napoleon for the benefit of his Rhenish underlings, the spoliation being veiled under the term *Mediatization*. The euphemism claims a brief explanation. In old German law the nobles and cities that gained local independence by shaking off the control of the local potentate were termed *immediate*, because they owed allegiance directly to the Emperor, without any feudal intermediary: if by mischance they fell under that hated control they were said to be *mediatized*. This term was now applied to acts that subjected the knight, or city, not to feudal control, but to complete absorption by the king or prince of Napoleon's creation. Six Imperial or Free Cities survived the Secularizations, namely, the three Hanse towns, and Augsburg, Frankfurt, and Nuremberg. The northern towns still held their ancient rights; but Augsburg and Nuremberg now fell to the King of Bavaria, and Frankfurt was bestowed by Napoleon on Dalberg, the Prince Primate of the Confederation.

German life began to lose much of the quaint diversity beloved of artists and poets; but it also gained much. No longer did the Count of Limburg-Styrum parade his

army of one colonel, six officers, and two privates in the valley of the Roehr: he and his passed under the sway of Murat, and the lapse of these pigmy forces made a national army possible in the dim future. No more did the Imperial lawyers at Wetzlar browse on evergreen lawsuits: justice was administered after the concise methods of Napoleon. The crops of the Swabian peasant were now comparatively safe from the deer of His Translucency of the castle hard by; for the spirit of the French Revolution breathed upon the old game laws and robbed them of their terrors. And the German patriot of to-day must still confess that the first impulse for reform, however questionable its motives and brutal its application, came from the new Charlemagne.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FALL OF PRUSSIA

We now turn to consider the influence which the founding of the Rhenish Confederation exerted on the international problems which were being discussed at Paris. Having gained this diplomatic victory, Napoleon, it seems, might well afford to be lenient to Prussia, to the Czar, even to England. Would he seize this opportunity, and soothe the fears of these Powers by a few timely concessions, or would he press them all the harder because the third of Germany was now under his control? Here again he was at the parting of the ways.

As the only obstacles to the conclusion of a durable peace with England were Sicily and Hanover, it may be well to examine here the bearing of these questions on the peace of Europe and Napoleon's future.

It is clear from his letters to Joseph that he had firmly resolved to conquer Sicily. Before his brother had reached Naples he warned him to prepare for the expulsion of the Bourbons from that island. For that purpose the French pushed on into Calabria and began to make extensive preparations — at the very time when Talleyrand stated to Lord Yarmouth that the French did not want Sicily. But the English forces defending that island prepared to deal a blow that would prevent a French descent. A force of about 5,000 men under Sir John Stuart landed in the Bay of St. Euphemia: and when, on the 4th of July, 1806, Reynier led 7,000 troops against them in full assurance of victory, his choicest battalions sank before the fierce bayonet charge of the British: in half an hour the French were in full retreat, leaving half their numbers on the field.

The moral effect of this victory was very great. Hitherto our troops, except in Egypt, had had no opportunity

of showing their splendid qualities. More than half a century had passed since at Minden a British force had triumphed over a French force in Europe ; and Napoleon expressed the current opinion when he declared to Joseph his joy that at last the *slow and clumsy English* had ventured on the mainland.[1] Moreover, the success at Maida, the general rising of the Calabrias that speedily followed, and Stuart's capture of Reggio, Cortone, and other towns, with large stores and forty cannon destined for the conquest of Sicily, scattered to the winds the French hope of carrying Sicily by a *coup de main.*

If there was any chance of the Russian and British Governments deserting the cause of the Bourbons, it was ended by the news from the Mediterranean ; and Napoleon now realized that the mastery of that sea — "*the principal and constant aim of my policy*" — had once more slipped from his grasp ! On their side the Bourbons were unduly elated by a further success which was more brilliant than solid. Queen Caroline, excited at the capture of Capri by Sir Sidney Smith, sought to rouse all her lost provinces : she intrigued behind the back of the King and of General Acton, while the knight-errant succeeded in paralyzing the plans of Sir John Stuart.[2] Meanwhile Masséna, after reducing the fortress of Gaëta to surrender, marched southward with a large force, and the British and Bourbon forces re-embarked for Sicily, leaving the fierce peasants and bandits of Calabria to the mercies of the conquerors. But Maida was not fought in vain. Sicily thenceforth was safe, the British army regained something of its ancient fame, and the hope of resisting Napoleon was strengthened both at St. Petersburg and London.

Peace can rarely be attained unless one of the combatants is overcome or both are exhausted. But neither Great Britain nor France was in this position. By sea our successes had been as continuous as those of Napoleon over our allies on land. In January we captured the Cape from the Dutch : in February the French force at St. Domingo surrendered to Sir James Duckworth : Admiral

[1] "Corresp.," Nos. 10522 and 10544. For a French account see the "Mems." of Baron Desvernois, p. 288.

[2] "F. O. Records," Naples, No. 73.

Warren in March closed the career of the adventurous Linois; and early in July a British force seized great treasure at Buenos Ayres, whence, however, it was soon obliged to retire. After these successes Fox could not but be firm. He refused to budge from the standpoint of *uti possidetis*, which our envoy had stated as the basis of negotiations; and the Earl of Lauderdale, who was sent to support and finally to supersede the Earl of Yarmouth, at once took a firm tone which drew forth a truculent rejoinder. If that was to be the basis, wrote Clarke, the French plenipotentiary, then France would require Moravia, Styria, the whole of Austria (Proper), and Hanover, and in that case leave England her few colonial conquests.

This reply of August 8th nearly severed the negotiations on the spot: but Talleyrand persistently refused to grant the passports which Lauderdale demanded — evidently in the hope that the Czar's ratification of Oubril's treaty would cause us to give up Sicily.[1] He was in error. On September 3rd the news reached Paris that Alexander scornfully rejected his envoy's handiwork. Nevertheless, Napoleon refused to forego his claims to Sicily; and the closing days of Fox were embittered by the thought that this negotiation, the last hope of a career fruitful in disappointments, was doomed to failure. After using his splendid eloquence for fifteen years in defence of the Revolution and its "heir," he came to the bitter conclusion that liberty had miscarried in France, and that that land had bent beneath the yoke in order the more completely to subjugate the Continent. He died on September 13th.

French historians, following an article in the "Moniteur" of November 26th, have often asserted that the death of Fox and the accession to power of the warlike faction changed the character of the negotiations.[2] Nothing can be further from the truth. Not long before his end, Fox thus expressed to his nephew his despair of peace :

[1] This was on Napoleon's advice. He wrote to Talleyrand from Rambouillet on August 8th, to give as an excuse for the delay, "The Emperor is hunting and will be back before the end of the week."

[2] So too Napoleon said at St. Helena to Las Cases: "Fox's death was one of the fatalities of my career."

"We can in honour do nothing without the full and *bonâ fide* consent of the Queen and Court of Naples; but, even exclusive of that consideration and of the great importance of Sicily, it is not so much the value of the point in dispute as the manner in which the French fly from their word that disheartens me. It is not Sicily, but the shuffling, insincere way in which they act, that shows me that they are playing a false game; and in that case it would be very imprudent to make any concessions, which by any possibility could be thought inconsistent with our honour, or could furnish our allies with a plausible pretence for suspecting, reproaching, or deserting us."

It is further to be noted that Lauderdale stayed on at Paris three weeks after the death of Fox; that he put forward no new demand, but required that Talleyrand should revert to his first promise of renouncing all claim to Sicily, and should treat conjointly with England and Russia. It was in vain. Napoleon's final concessions were that the Bourbons, after losing Sicily, should have the Balearic Isles and be pensioned *by Spain;* that Russia should hold Corfu (as she already did); and that we should recover Hanover from Prussia, and keep Malta, the Cape, Tobago, and the three French towns in India; but except Hanover, all of these were in our power. On Sicily he would not bate one jot of his pretensions. The negotiations were therefore broken off on October 6th, twelve days after Napoleon left Paris to marshal his troops against Prussia.[1] The whole affair revealed Napoleon's determination to trick the allies into signing separate and disadvantageous treaties, and thus to regain by craft the ground which he had lost in fair fight at Maida.

If Sicily was the rock of stumbling between us and Napoleon, Hanover was the chief cause of the war between France and Prussia. During the negotiations at Paris, Lord Yarmouth privately informed Lucchesini, the Prussian ambassador, that Talleyrand made no difficulty about the restitution of Hanover to George III. The news, when forwarded to Berlin at the close of July, caused a nervous flutter in ministerial circles, where every effort was being made to keep on good terms with France.

Even before this news arrived, the task was far from easy. Murat, when occupying his new Duchy of Berg,

[1] Despatches of September 26th and October 6th.

pushed on his troops into the old Church lands of Essen and Werden. Prussia looked on these districts as her own, and the sturdy patriot Blücher at once marched in his soldiers, tore down Murat's proclamations, and restored the Prussian eagle with blare of trumpet and beat of drum.[1] A collision was with difficulty averted by the complaisance of Frederick William, who called back his troops and referred the question to lawyers; but even the King was piqued when the Grand-Duke of Berg sent him a letter of remonstrance on Blücher's conduct, commencing with the familiar address, *Mon frère.*

Blücher meanwhile and the soldiery were eating out their hearts with rage, as they saw the French pouring across the Rhine, and constructing a bridge of boats at Wesel; and had they known that that important stronghold, the key of North Germany, was quietly declared to be a French garrison town, they would probably have forced the hands of the King.[2] For at this time Frederick William and Haugwitz were alarmed by the formation of the Rhenish Confederation, and were not wholly reassured by Napoleon's suggestion that the abolition of the old Empire must be an advantage to Prussia. They clutched eagerly, however, at his proposal that Prussia should form a league of the North German States, and made overtures to the two most important States, Saxony and Hesse-Cassel. During a few halcyon days the King even proposed to assume the title *Emperor of Prussia*, from which, however, the Elector of Saxony ironically dissuaded him. This castle in the air faded away when news reached Berlin at the beginning of August that Napoleon was seeking to bring the Elector of Hesse-Cassel into the Rhenish Confederation, and was offering as a bait the domains of some Imperial Knights and the principality of Fulda, now held by the Prince of Orange, a relative of Frederick William. Moreover, the moves of the French troops in Thuringia were so threatening to Saxony that the Court of Dresden began to scout the project of a North German Confederation.

[1] Bailleu, "Frankreich und Preussen," Introd.
[2] Decree of July 26th.

Still, the King and Haugwitz tried to persuade themselves that Napoleon meant well for Prussia, that England had been doing her utmost to make bad blood between the two allies, and that "great results could not be attained without some friction." In this hope they were encouraged by the French ambassador, the man who had enticed Prussia to her demobilization. He was charged by Talleyrand to report at Berlin that "peace with England would be made, as well as with Russia, if France had consented to the restitution of Hanover. — I have renewed," added Laforest, "the assurance that the Emperor [Napoleon] would never yield on this point."

And yet at that very time the French Foreign Office was at work upon a Project of a Treaty in which the restitution of Hanover to George III. was expressly named and received the assent of Napoleon.[1] The Prussian ambassador, Lucchesini, had some inkling of this from French sources,[2] as well as from Lord Yarmouth, and on July 28th penned a despatch which fell like a thunderbolt on the optimists of Berlin. It crossed on the way — such is the irony of diplomacy — a despatch from Berlin that required him to show unlimited confidence in Napoleon. From confidence the King now rushed to the opposite extreme, and saw Napoleon's hand in all the friction of the last few weeks.

Here again he was wrong; for the French Emperor had held back Murat and the other hot-bloods of the army who were longing to measure swords with Prussia.[3] His correspondence proves that his first thoughts were always in the Mediterranean. For one page that he wrote about German affairs he wrote twenty to Joseph or Eugène on the need of keeping a firm hand and punishing Calabrian rebels — "shoot three men in every village" — above all, on the plans for conquering Sicily. It was therefore with real surprise that on August 16th–18th he

[1] See "Corresp." No. 10604, note; also Talleyrand's letter of August 4th ("Lettres inédites," p. 245), showing the indemnities that might be offered to Prussia after the loss of Hanover: they included, of course, little States, Anhalt, Lippe, Waldeck, etc.

[2] Gentz, "Ausgew. Schriften," vol. v., p. 252. Conversation with Lucchesini.

[3] "Corresp.," Nos. 10575, 10587, 10633.

learnt from a purloined despatch of Lucchesini that the latter suspected him of planning with the Czar the partition of Prussian Poland. He treated the matter with contempt, and seems to have thought that Prussia would meekly accept the morsels which he proposed to throw to her in place of Hanover. But he misread the character of Frederick William, if he thought so grievous an insult would be passed over, and he knew not the power of the Prussian Queen to kindle the fire of patriotism.

Queen Louisa was at this time thirty years of age and in the flower of that noble matronly beauty which bespoke a pure and exalted being. As daughter of a poverty-stricken prince of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, her youth had been spent in the homeliest fashion, until her charms won the heart of the Crown Prince of Prussia. Her first entry into Berlin was graced by an act that proclaimed a loving nature. When a group of children dressed in white greeted her with verses of welcome, she lifted up and kissed their little leader, to the scandal of stiff dowagers and the joy of the citizens. The incident recalls the easy grace and disregard of etiquette shown by Marie Antoinette at Versailles in her young bridal days; and, in truth, these queens have something in common besides their loveliness and their misfortunes. Both were mated with cold and uninspiring consorts. Destiny had refused both to Frederick William and to Louis XVI. the power of exciting feelings warmer than the esteem and respect due to a worthy man; and all the fervour of loyalty was aroused by their queens.

Louisa was a North German Marie Antoinette, but more staid and homely than the vivacious daughter of Maria Theresa. Neither did she interfere much in politics, until the great crash came: even when the blow was impending and the patriotic statesmen, with whom she sympathized, begged the King to remove Haugwitz, she disappointed them by withholding the entreaties which her instincts urged but her wifely obedience restrained. Her influence as yet was that of a noble, fascinating woman, who softened the jars occasioned by the king's narrow and pedantic nature, and purified the Court from the grossness of the past. But in the dark days that were

to come, her faith and enthusiasm breathed new force into a down-trodden people ; and where all else was shattered, the King and Queen still held forth the ideal of that first and strongest of Teutonic institutions, a pure family life.

The "Memoirs" of Hardenberg show that the Queen quietly upheld the patriotic cause ;[1] and in the tone of the letter that Frederick William wrote to the Czar (August 8th) there is something of feminine resentment against the French Emperor : after recounting his grievances at Napoleon's hands, he continued :

"If the news be true, if he be capable of perfidy so black, be convinced, Sire, that it is not merely a question about Hanover between him and me, but that he has decided to make war against me at all costs. He wants no other Power beside his own. . . . Tell me, Sire, I conjure you, if I may hope that your troops will be within reach of succour for me, and if I may count on them in case of aggression."

Alexander wrote a cheering response, advising him to settle his differences with England and Sweden, and assuring him of help. Whereupon the King replied (September 6th) that he had reopened the North Sea rivers to British ships and hoped for peace and pecuniary help from London. He concluded thus :

"Meanwhile, Bonaparte has left me at my ease: for not only does he not enter into any explanation about my armaments, but he has even forbidden his Ministers to give and receive any explanations whatever. It appears, then, that it is I who am to take the initiative. My troops are marching on all sides to hasten that moment." [2]

These last sentences are the handwriting on the wall for the *ancien régime* in Prussia. Taking the bland assurances of Talleyrand and the studied indifference of Laforest as signs that Napoleon might be caught off his guard, Prussia continued her warlike preparations ; and in order to gain time Lucchesini was recalled and replaced by an envoy who was to enter into lengthy explanations. The trick did not deceive Napoleon, who on September 3rd had heard with much surprise that Russia meant to continue the war. At once he saw the germ of a new Coalition, and bent his

[1] "Mems.," vol. iii., pp. 155, *et seq.* The Prusso-Russian convention of July, by which these Powers mutually guaranteed the integrity of their States, was mainly the work of Hardenberg.

[2] Bailleu, pp. 540–552. See too Fournier's "Napoleon," vol. ii., p. 106.

energies to the task of conciliating Austria, and of fomenting the disputes between Russia and Turkey. Towards Frederick William his tone was that of a friend who grieves at an unexpected quarrel. How — he exclaimed to Lucchesini on the ambassador's departure — how could the King credit him with encouraging the intrigues of a fussy ambassador at Cassel or the bluster of Murat?

As for Hanover, he had intended sending some one to Berlin to propose an equivalent for it in case England still made its restitution a *sine quâ non* of peace. "But," he added, "if your young officers and your women at Berlin want war, I am preparing to satisfy them. Yet my ambition turns wholly to Italy. She is a mistress whose favours I will share with no one. I will have all the Adriatic. The Pope shall be my vassal, and I will conquer Sicily. On North Germany I have no claims: I do not object to the Hanse towns entering your confederation. As to the inclusion of Saxony in it, my mind is not yet made up."[1]

Indeed, the tenor of his private correspondence proves that before the first week of September he did not expect a new Coalition. He believed that England and Russia would give way before him, and that Prussia would never dare to stir. For the Court of Berlin he had a sovereign contempt, as for the "old coalition machines" in general. His conduct of affairs at this time betokens, not so much desire for war as lack of imagination where other persons' susceptibilities are concerned. It is probable that he then wanted peace with England and peace on the Continent; for his diplomacy won conquests fully as valuable as the booty of his sword, and only in a naval peace could he lay the foundations of that oriental empire which, he assured O'Meara at St. Helena, held the first place in his thoughts after the overthrow of Austria. But it was not in his nature to make the needful concessions. "*I must follow my policy in a geometrical line*," he said to Lucchesini. England might have Hanover and a few colonies if she would let Sicily go to a Bonaparte: as for Prussia, she might absorb half-a-dozen neighbouring princelings.

[1] Bailleu, pp. 556–557. So too Napoleon's letter of September 5th to Berthier is the first hint of his thought of a Continental war.

That is the gist of Napoleon's European policy in the summer of 1806; and the surprise which he expressed to Mollien at the rejection of his offers is probably genuine. Sensitive to the least insult himself, his bluntness of perception respecting the honour of others might almost qualify him to rank with Aristotle's man devoid of feeling. It is perfectly true that he did not make war on Prussia in 1806 any more than on England in 1803. He only made peace impossible.[1]

The condition on which Prussia now urgently insisted was the entire evacuation of Germany by French troops. This Napoleon refused to concede until Frederick William demobilized his army, a step that would have once more humbled him in the eyes of his people. It might even have led to his dethronement. For an incident had just occurred in Bavaria that fanned German sentiment to a flame. A bookseller of Nuremberg, named Palm, was proved by French officers to have sold an anonymous pamphlet entitled "Germany in her deep Humiliation." It was by no means of a revolutionary type, and the worthy man believed it to be a mistake when he was arrested by the military authorities. He was wrong. Napoleon had sent orders that a terrible example must be made in order to stop the sale of patriotic German pamphlets. Palm was therefore haled away to Braunau, an Austrian town then held by French troops, was tried by martial law and shot (August 25th). Never did the Emperor commit a greater blunder. The outrage sent a thrill of indignation through the length and breadth of Germany. Instead of quenching, it inflamed the national sentiment, and thus rendered doubly difficult any peaceful compromise between Frederick William and Napoleon. The latter was now looked upon as a tyrant by the citizen class which his reforms were designed to conciliate: and Frederick William became almost the champion of Germany when he demanded the withdrawal of the French troops.

Unfortunately, the King refused to appoint Ministers

[1] Queen Louisa said to Gentz (October 9th) that war had been decided on, not owing to selfish calculations, but the sentiment of honour (Garden, "Traités," vol. x., p. 133).

who inspired confidence. With Hardenberg in place of Haugwitz, men would have felt sure that the sword would not again be tamely sheathed; great efforts were made to effect this change, but met with a chilling repulse from the King.[1] It is true that Haugwitz and Beyme now expressed the bitterest hatred of Napoleon, as well they might for a man who had betrayed their confidence. But, none the less, the King's refusal to change his men along with his policy was fatal. Both at St. Petersburg and London no trust was felt in Prussia as long as Haugwitz was at the helm. The man who had twice steered the ship of state under Napoleon's guns might do it again; and both England and Russia waited to see some irrevocable step taken before they again risked an army for that prince of waverers.

Grenville rather tardily sent Lord Morpeth to arrange an alliance, but only after he should receive a solemn pledge that Hanover would be restored. That envoy approached the Prussian headquarters just in time to be swept away in the torrent of fugitives from Jena. As for Russia, she had awaited the arrival of a Prussian officer at St. Petersburg to concert a plan of campaign. When he arrived he had no plan; and the Czar, perplexed by the fatuity of his ally, and the hostility of the Turks, refused to march his troops forthwith into Prussia.[2] Equally disappointing was the conduct of Austria. This Power, bleeding from the wounds of last year and smarting under the jealousy of Russia, refused to move until the allies had won a victory. And so, thanks to the jealousies of the old monarchies, Frederick William had no Russian or Austrian troops at his side, no sinews of war from London to invigorate his preparations, when he staked his all in the high places of Thuringia. He gained, it is true, the support of Saxony and Weimar; but this brought less than 21,000 men to his side.

[1] A memorial was handed in to him on September 2nd. It was signed by the King's brothers, Henry and William, also by the leader of the warlike party, Prince Louis Ferdinand, by Generals Rüchel and Phull, and by the future dictator, Stein. The King rebuked all of them. See Pertz, "Stein," vol. i., p. 347.

[2] "F. O.," Russia, No. 64. Stuart's despatches of September 30th and October 21st.

On the other hand, Napoleon, as Protector of the Rhenish Confederation, secured the aid of 25,000 South Germans, as well as an excellent fortified base at Würzburg. His troops, holding the citadels of Passau and Braunau on the Austrian frontier, kept the Hapsburgs quiet; and 60,000 French and Dutch troops at Wesel menaced the Prussians in Hanover. Above all, his forces already in Germany were strengthened until, in the early days of October, some 200,000 men were marching from the Main towards the Duchy of Weimar. Soult and Ney led 60,000 men from Amberg towards Baireuth and Hof: Bernadotte and Davoust, with 90,000, marched towards Schleitz, while Lannes and Augereau, with 46,000, moved by a road further to the left towards Saalfeld.

The progress of these dense columns near together and through a hilly country presented great difficulties, which only the experience of the officers, the energy and patience of the men, and the genius of their great leader, could overcome. Meanwhile Napoleon had quietly left Paris on September 25th. Travelling at his usual rapid rate, he reached Mainz on the 28th: he was at Würzburg on October 2nd; there he directed the operations, confident that the impact of his immense force would speedily break the Prussians, drive them down the valley of the Saale and thus detach the Elector of Saxony from an alliance that already was irksome.

The French, therefore, had a vast mass of seasoned fighters, a good base of operations, and a clear plan of attack. The Prussians, on the contrary, could muster barely 128,000 men, including the Saxons, for service in the field; and of these 27,000 with Rüchel were on the frontier of Hesse-Cassel seeking to assure the alliance of the Elector. The commander-in-chief was the septuagenarian Duke of Brunswick, well known for his failure at Valmy in 1792 and his recent support to the policy of complaisance to France. His appointment aroused anger and consternation; and General Kalckreuth expressed to Gentz the general opinion when he said that the Duke was quite incompetent for such a command: "His character is not strong enough, his mediocrity, irresolution, and untrustworthiness would ruin the best undertaking."

The Duke himself was aware of his incompetence. Why, then, we ask, did he accept the command? The answer is startling; but it rests on the evidence of General von Müffling:

> "The Duke of Brunswick had accepted the command *in order to avert war*. I can affirm this with perfect certainty, since I have heard it from his own lips more than once. He was fully aware of the weaknesses of the Prussian army and the incompetence of its officers."[1]

Thus there was seen the strange sight of a diffident, peace-loving King accompanying the army and sharing in all the deliberations; while these were nominally presided over by a despondent old man who still intrigued to preserve peace, and shifted on to the King the responsibility of every important act. And yet there were able generals who could have acted with effect, even if they fell short of the opinion hopefully bruited by General Rüchel, that "several were equal to M. de Bonaparte." Events were to prove that Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, and Blücher rivalled the best of the French Marshals; but in this war their lights were placed under bushels and only shone forth when the official covers had been shattered. Scharnhorst, already renowned for his strategic and administrative genius, took part in some of the many councils of war where everything was discussed and little was decided; but his opinion had no weight, for on October 7th he wrote: "What we ought to do I know right well, what we *shall* do only the gods know."[2] He evidently referred to the need of concentration. At that time the thin Prussian lines were spread out over a front of eighty-five miles, the Saxons being near Gera, the chief army, under Brunswick, at Erfurth, while Rüchel was so far distant on the west that he could only come up at Jena just one hour too late to avert disaster.

And yet with these weak and scattered forces, Prince Hohenlohe proposed a bold move forward to the Main. Brunswick, on the other hand, counselled a prudent defensive; but he could not, or would not, enforce his plan; and the result was an oscillation between the two extremes.

[1] Müffling, "Aus meinem Leben."
[2] Lettow-Vorbeck, "Der Krieg von 1806–7," p. 163.

Had he massed all his forces so as to command the valleys of the Saale and Elster near Jena and Gera, the campaign might possibly have been prolonged until the Russians came up. As it was, the allies dulled the ardour of their troops by marches, counter-marches, and interminable councils-of-war, while Napoleon's columns were threading their way along those valleys at the average rate of fifteen miles a day, in order to turn the allied left and cut the connection between Prussia and Saxony.[1]

The first serious fighting was on October the 10th at Saalfeld, where Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia with a small force sought to protect Hohenlohe's flank march westwards on Jena. The task was beyond the strength even of this flower of Prussian chivalry. He was overpowered by the weight and vigour of Lannes' attack, and when already wounded in a cavalry *mêlée* was pierced through the body by an officer to whom he proudly refused to surrender. The death of this hero, the "Alcibiades" of Prussia, cast a gloom over the whole army, and mournful faces at headquarters seemed to presage yet worse disasters. Perhaps it was some inkling of this discouragement, or a laudable desire to stop "an impolitic war," that urged Napoleon two days later to pen a letter to the King of Prussia urging him to make peace before he was crushed, as he assuredly would be. In itself the letter seems admirable—until one remembers the circumstances of the case. The King had pledged his word to the Czar to make war ; if, therefore, he now made peace and sent the Russians back, he would once more stand condemned of preferring dishonourable ease to the noble hazards of an affair of honour. As Napoleon was aware of the union of the King and Czar, this letter must be regarded as an attempt to dissolve the alliance and tarnish Frederick William's reputation. It was viewed in that light by that monarch ; and there is not a hint in Napoleon's other letters that he really expected peace.

He was then at Gera, pushing forward his corps towards Naumburg so as to cut off the Prussians from Saxony and

[1] See Prince Hohenlohe's "Letters on Strategy" (p. 62, Eng. ed.) for the effect of this rapid marching ; Foucart's "Campagne de Prusse," vol. i., pp. 323–343 ; also Lord Fitzmaurice's "Duke of Brunswick."

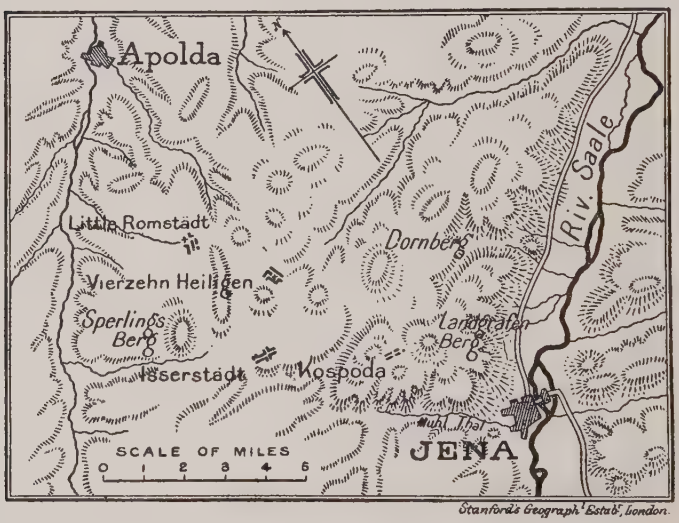
the Elbe. Great as was his superiority, these movements occasioned such a dispersion of his forces as to invite attack from enterprising foes; but he despised the Prussian generals as imbeciles, and endeavoured to unsteady their rank and file by seizing and burning their military stores at the latter town. He certainly believed that they were all in retreat northwards, and great was his surprise when he heard from Lannes early on October 13th that his scouts, after scaling the hills behind Jena in a dense mist, had come upon the Prussian army. The news was only partly correct. It was only Hohenlohe's corps: for the bulk of that army, under Brunswick, was retreating northwards, and nearly stumbled upon the corps of Davoust and Bernadotte behind Naumburg.

Lannes also was in danger on the Landgrafenberg. This is a lofty hill which towers above the town of Jena and the narrow winding vale of the Saale; while its other slopes, to the north and west, rise above and dominate the broken and irregular plateau on which Hohenlohe's force was encamped. Had the Prussians attacked his weary regiments in force, they might easily have hurled them into the Saale. But Hohenlohe had received orders to retire northwards in the rear of Brunswick, as soon as he had rallied the detachment of Rüchel near Weimar, and was therefore indisposed to venture on the bold offensive which now was his only means of safety. The respite thus granted was used by the French to hurry every available regiment up the slopes north and west of Jena. Late in the afternoon, Napoleon himself ascended the Landgrafenberg to survey the plateau; while a pastor of the town was compelled to show a path further north which leads to the same plateau through a gulley called the Rau-thal.[1]

On the south the heights sink away into a wider valley, the Mühl-thal, along which runs the road to Weimar; and on this side too their wooded brows are broken by gulleys, up one of which runs a winding track known as the Schnecke or Snail. Villages and woods diversified the plateau and hindered the free use of that extended line formation on which the Prussians relied, while favour-

[1] Höpfner, vol. i., p. 383; and Lettow-Vorbeck, vol. i., p. 345.

ing the operations of dense columns preceded by clouds of skirmishers by which Napoleon so often hewed his way to victory. His greatest advantage, however, lay in the ignorance of his foes. Hohenlohe, believing that he was confronted only by Lannes' corps, took little thought about what was going on in his front, and judging the Mühl-thal approach alone to be accessible, posted his chief force on this side. So insufficient a guard was therefore kept on the side of the Landgrafenberg that the French, under cover of the darkness, not only crowned the summit



densely with troops, but dragged up whole batteries of cannon.

The toil was stupendous: in one of the steep hollow tracks a number of cannon and wagons stuck fast; but the Emperor, making his rounds at midnight, brought the magic of his presence to aid the weary troops and rebuke the officers whose negligence had caused this block. Lantern in hand, he went up and down the line to direct the work; and Savary, who saw this scene, noted the wonder of the men, as they caught sight of the Emperor, the renewed energy of their blows at the rocks, and their

NAPOLEON AT JENA WITH GENERALS BERTHIER AND MURAT.

From a painting by Horace Vernet.

whispers of surprise that *he* should come in person when their officers were asleep. The night was far spent when, after seeing the first wagon right through the narrow steep, he repaired to his bivouac amidst his Guards on the summit, and issued further orders before snatching a brief repose. By such untiring energy did he assure victory. Apart from its immense effect on the spirits of his troops, his vigilance reaped a rich reward. Jena was won by a rapid concentration of troops, and the prompt seizure of a commanding position almost under the eyes of an unenterprising enemy. The corps of Soult and Ney spent most of the night and early morning in marching towards Jena and taking up their positions on the right or north wing, while Lannes and the Guard held the central height, and Augereau's corps in the Mühl-thal threatened the Saxons and Prussians guarding the Schnecke.[1]

A dense fog screened the moves of the assailants early on the morrow, and, after some confused but obstinate fighting, the French secured their hold on the plateau not only above the town of Jena, where their onset took the Prussians by surprise, but also above the Mühl-thal, where the enemy were in force.

By ten o'clock the fog lifted, and the warm rays of the autumn sun showed the dense masses of the French advancing towards the middle of the plateau. Hohenlohe now saw the full extent of his error and despatched an urgent message to Rüchel for aid. It was too late. The French centre, led by Lannes, began to push back the Prussian lines on the village named Vierzehn Heiligen. It was in vain that Hohenlohe's choice squadrons flung themselves on the serried masses in front: the artillery and musketry fire disordered them, while French dragoons were ready to profit by their confusion. The village was lost, then retaken by a rally of the Prussians, then lost again when Ney was reinforced; and when the full vigour of the French attack was developed by the advance of Soult and Augereau on either wing, Napoleon launched his reserves, his Guard, and Murat's squadrons on the disordered lines. The impact was irresistible, and Hohenlohe's force was swept away. Then it was that Rüchel's

[1] Foucart, *op. cit.*, pp. 606–623.

force drew near, and strove to stem the rout. Advancing steadily, as if on parade, his troops for a brief space held up the French onset; but neither the dash of the Prussian horse nor the bravery of the foot-soldiers could dam that mighty tide, which laid low the gallant leader and swept his lines away into the general wreck.[1]

In the headlong flight before Murat's horsemen, the fugitives fell in with another beaten army, that of Brunswick. At Jena the Prussians, if defeated, were not disgraced: before the first shot was fired their defeat was a mathematical certainty. At the crisis of the battle they had but 47,400 men at hand, while Napoleon then disposed of 83,600 combatants.[2] But at Auerstädt they were driven back and disgraced. There they had a decided superiority in numbers, having more than 35,000 of their choicest troops, while opposite to them stood only the 27,000 men of Davoust's corps.

Hitherto Davoust had been remarkable rather for his dog-like devotion to Napoleon than for any martial genius; and the brilliant Marmont had openly scoffed at his receiving the title of Marshal. But, under his quiet exterior and plodding habits, there lay concealed a variety of gifts which only needed a great occasion to shine forth and astonish the world.[3] The time was now at hand. Frederick William and Brunswick were marching from Auerstädt to make good their retreat on the Elbe, when their foremost horsemen, led by the gallant Blücher, saw a solid wall of French infantry loom through the morning fog. It was part of Davoust's corps, strongly posted in and around the village of Hassenhausen.

[1] Marbot says Rüchel was killed: but he recovered from his wound, and did good service the next spring.

Vernet's picture of Napoleon inspecting his Guards at Jena before their charge seems to represent the well-known incident of a soldier calling out "*en avant*"; whereupon Napoleon sharply turned and bade the man wait till he had commanded in twenty battles before he gave him advice.

[2] Foucart, p. 671.

[3] Lang thus describes four French Marshals whom he saw at Ansbach: "Bernadotte, a very tall dark man, with fiery eyes under thick brows; Mortier, still taller, with a stupid sentinel look; Lefebvre, an old Alsatian camp-boy, with his wife, former washer-woman to the regiment; and Davoust, a little, smooth-pated, unpretending man, who was never tired of waltzing."

At once Blücher charged, only to be driven back with severe loss. Again he came on, this time supported by infantry and cannon: again he was repulsed; for Davoust, aided by the fog, had seized the neighbouring heights which commanded the high-road, and held them with firm grip. Determined to brush aside or crush this stubborn foe, the Duke of Brunswick now led heavy masses along the narrow defile; but the steady fire of the French laid him low, with most of the officers; and as the Prussians fell back, Davoust swung forward his men to threaten their flanks. The King was dismayed at these repeated checks, and though the Prussian reserves under Kalckreuth could have been called up to overwhelm the hard-pressed French by the weight of numbers, yet he judged it better to draw off his men and fall back on Hohenlohe for support.

But what a support! Instead of an army, it was a terrified mob flying before Murat's sabres, that met them half-way between Auerstädt and Weimar. Threatened also by Bernadotte's corps on their left flank, the two Prussian armies now melted away in one indistinguishable torrent that was stemmed only by the sheltering walls of Erfurt, Magdeburg, and of fortresses yet more remote.

Of the twin battles of Jena and Auerstädt, the latter was unquestionably the more glorious for the French arms. That Napoleon should have beaten an army of little more than half his numbers is in no way remarkable. What is strange is that so consummate a leader should have been entirely ignorant of the distribution of the enemy's forces, and should have left Davoust with only 27,000 men exposed to the attack of Brunswick with nearly 40,000.[1] In his bulletins, as in the "Relation Officielle," the Emperor sought to gloze over his error by magnifying Hohenlohe's corps into a great army and attenuating Davoust's splendid exploit, which in his private letters he warmly praised. The fact is, he had made all his dispositions in the belief that he had the main body of the Prussians before him at Jena.

That is why, on the afternoon of the 13th, he hastily

[1] Davoust, "Opérations du 3me Corps," pp. 31, 32. French writers reduce their force to 24,000, and raise Brunswick's total to 60,000. Lehmann's "Scharnhorst," vol. i., p. 433, gives the details.

sent to recall Murat's horse and Bernadotte's corps from Naumburg and its vicinity; and in consequence Bernadotte took no very active part in the fighting. For this he has been bitterly blamed, on the strength of an assertion that Napoleon during the night of the 13th–14th sent him an order to support Davoust. This order has never been produced, and it finds no place in the latest and fullest collection of French official despatches, which, however, contains some that fully exonerate Bernadotte.[1] Unfortunately for Bernadotte's fame, the tattle of memoir-writers is more attractive and gains more currency than the prosaic facts of despatches.

Fortune plays an immense part in warfare; and never did she favour the Emperor more than on October the 14th, 1806. Fortune and the skill and bravery of Davoust and his corps turned what might have been an almost doubtful conflict into an overwhelming victory. Though Napoleon was as ignorant of the movements of Brunswick as he was of the flank march of Blücher at Waterloo, yet the enterprise and tenacity of Davoust and Lannes yielded him, on the Thuringian heights, a triumph scarcely paralleled in the annals of war. It is difficult to overpraise those Marshals for the energy with which they clung to the foe and brought on a battle under conditions highly favourable to the French: without their efforts, the Prussian army could never have been shattered on a single day.

The flood of invasion now roared down the Thuringian valleys and deluged the plains of Saxony and Brandenburg. Rivers and ramparts were alike helpless to stay that all-devouring tide. On October the 16th, 16,000 men surrendered at Erfurt to Murat: then, spurring eastward, *le beau sabreur* rushed on the wreck of Hohenlohe's force, and with the aid of Lannes' untiring corps compelled it to surrender at Prenzlau.[2] Blücher meanwhile

[1] Foucart, pp. 604–606, 670, and 694–697, who only blames him for slowness. But he set out from Naumburg before dawn, and, though delayed by difficult tracks, was near Apolda at 4 P.M., and took 1,000 prisoners.

[2] For this service, as for his exploits at Austerlitz, Napoleon gave few words of praise. Lannes' remonstrance is printed by General Thoumas, "Le Maréchal Lannes," p. 169. The Emperor secretly disliked Lannes for his very independent bearing.

stubbornly retreated to the north ; but, with Murat, Soult, and Bernadotte dogging his steps, he finally threw himself into Lübeck, where, after a last desperate effort, he surrendered to overpowering numbers (November 7th).

Here the gloom of defeat was relieved by gleams of heroism ; but before the walls of other Prussian strongholds disaster was blackened by disgrace. Held by timid old men or nerveless pedants, they scarcely waited for a vigorous attack. A few cannon-shots, or even a demonstration of cavalry, generally brought out the white flag. In quick succession, Spandau, Stettin, Küstrin, Magdeburg, and Hameln opened their gates, the governor of the last-named being mainly concerned about securing his future retiring pension from the French as soon as Hanover passed into their keeping.

Amidst these shameful surrenders the capital fell into the hands of Davoust (October 25th). Varnhagen von Ense had described his mingled surprise and admiration at seeing those "lively, impudent, mean-looking little fellows," who had beaten the splendid soldiers trained in the school of Frederick the Great. His wonder was natural ; but all who looked beneath the surface well knew that Prussia was overthrown before the first shot was fired. She was the victim of a deadening barrack routine, of official apathy or corruption, and of a degrading policy which dulled the enthusiasm of her sons.

Thirteen days after the great battle, Napoleon himself entered Berlin in triumph. It was the first time that he allowed himself a victor's privilege, and no pains were spared to impress the imagination of mankind by a parade of his choicest troops. First came the foot grenadiers and chasseurs of the Imperial Guard : behind the central group marched other squadrons and battalions of these veterans, already famed as the doughtiest fighters of their age. In their midst came the mind of this military machine — Napoleon, accompanied by three Marshals and a brilliant staff. Among them men noted the plain, soldier-like Berthier, the ever trusty and methodical chief of the staff. At his side rode Davoust, whose round and placid face gave little promise of his rapid rush to the front rank among the French paladins. There too was the tall, hand-

some, threatening form of Augereau, whose services at Jena, meritorious as they were, scarcely maintained his fame at the high level to which it soared at Castiglione. Then came Napoleon's favourite aide-de-camp, Duroc, a short, stern, war-hardened man, well known in Berlin, where twice he had sought to rivet close the bonds of the French alliance.

Above all, the gaze of the awe-struck crowd was fixed on the figure of the chief, now grown to the roundness of robust health amidst toils that would have worn most men to a shadow; and on the face, no longer thin with the unsatisfied longings of youth, but square and full with toil requited and ambition wellnigh sated — a visage redeemed from the coarseness of the epicure's only by the knitted brows that bespoke ceaseless thought, and by the keen, melancholy, unfathomable eyes.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM: FRIEDLAND

"I know full well that London is a corner of the world, and that Paris is its centre." — *Letter of Napoleon,* August 18th, 1806.

On the 21st of November, 1806, Napoleon issued at Berlin the decree which proclaimed open and unrelenting war on English industry and commerce, a war that was to embroil the whole civilized world and cease only with his overthrow. After reciting his complaints against the English maritime code, he declared the British Isles to be in a state of blockade, interdicted all commerce with them, threatened seizure and imprisonment to English goods and subjects wherever found by French or allied troops, forbade all trade in English and colonial wares, and excluded from French and allied ports any ship that had touched at those of Great Britain; while any ship that connived at the infraction of the present decree was to be held a good prize of war.[1] This ukase, which was binding for France, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, and the Rhenish Confederation, formed the foundation of the Continental System, a term applicable to the sum total of the measures that aimed at ruining England by excluding her goods from the Continent.

The plan of strangling Britain by her own wealth was not peculiar to Napoleon. In common with much of his political stock-in-trade he had it from the Jacobins, who stoutly maintained that England's wealth was fictitious and would collapse as soon as her commerce was attacked in the Indies and excluded from the Rhine and Elbe. At first the fulminations of Parisian legislators fell idly on the stately pile of British industry; but when the

[1] "Nap. Corresp.," November 21st, 1807; Baron Lumbroso's "Napoleone I e l' Inghilterra," p. 103; Garden, vol. x., p. 307.

young Bonaparte appeared on the scene, the commercial warfare became serious. As soon as his victories in Italy widened the sphere of French influence, the Directory banned the entry of all our products, counting all cotton and woollen goods as English unless the contrary could be proved by certificates of origin.[1] Public opinion in France, which, unless held in by an intelligent monarch, has always swung towards protection or prohibition, welcomed that vigorous measure; and great was the outcry of manufacturers when it was rumoured in 1802 that Napoleon was about to make a commercial treaty with the national enemy. Tradition and custom, therefore, were all on his side, when, after Trafalgar, he concentrated all his energy on his "coast-system."[2]

Ostensibly the Berlin Decree was a retort to our Order in Council of May 16th, 1806, which declared all the coast between Brest and the Elbe in a state of blockade; and French historians have defended it on this ground, asserting that it was a necessary reply to England's aggressive action.[3] But this plea can scarcely be maintained. The aggressor, surely, was the man who forced Prussia to close the neutral North German coast to British goods (February, 1806). Besides, there is indirect proof that Napoleon looked on our blockade of the northern coasts as not unreasonable. In his subsequent negotiations with us, he raised no protest against it, and made no difficulty about our maritime code: if we would let him seize Sicily, we might, it seems, have re-enacted that code in all its earlier stringency. Far from doing so, Fox and his successors relaxed the blockade of North Germany; and by an order dated September 25th, the coast between the Elbe and the Ems was declared free.

Napoleon's grievance against us was thereby materially

[1] This decree, of 10 Brumaire, an V., is printed in full, and commented on by Lumbroso, *op. cit.*, p. 49. See too Sorel, "L'Europe et la Rév. Fr.," vol. iii., p. 389; and my article, "Napoleon and English Commerce," in the "Eng. Hist. Rev." of October, 1893.

[2] This phrase occurs, I believe, first in the conversation of Napoleon on May 1st, 1803: "We will form a more complete coast-system, and England shall end by shedding tears of blood" (Miot de Melito, "Mems.," vol. i., chap. xiv.).

[3] *E.g.*, Fauchille, "Du Blocus maritime," pp. 93 *et seq.*

lessened, and his protest against fictitious blockades in the preamble of the Berlin decree really applied only to our action on the coast between the Helder and Brest, where our cruisers were watching the naval preparations still going on. His report in the interests of outraged law was certainly curious; he declared our 3,000 miles of coast in a state of blockade — a mere *brutum fulmen* in point of fact, but designed to give a show of legality to his Continental System. Yet, apart from this thin pretext, he troubled very little about law. Indeed, blockade is an act of war; and its application to this or that part or coast depends on the will and power of the belligerents. Napoleon frankly recognized that fact; and, however much his preambles appealed to law, his conduct was decided solely by expediency. When he wanted peace (along with Sicily) he said nothing about our maritime claims: when the war went on, he used them as a pretext for an action that was ten times as stringent.

The gauntlet thrown down by him at Berlin was promptly taken up by Great Britain. An Order in Council of January 7th, 1807, forbade neutrals to trade between the ports of France and her allies, or between ports that observed the Berlin decree, under pain of seizure and confiscation of the ship and cargo. In return Napoleon issued from Warsaw (January 27th) a decree, ordering the seizure in the Hanse Towns of all English goods and colonial produce. By way of reprisal England reimposed a strict blockade on the North German coast (March 11th); and after the Peace of Tilsit laid the Continent at the feet of Napoleon, he frankly told the diplomatic circle at Fontainebleau that he would no longer allow any commercial or political relations between the Continent and England.

"The sea must be subdued by the land." In these words Napoleon pithily summed up his enterprise; and whatever may be thought of the means which he adopted, the design is not without grandeur. Granted that Britannia ruled the waves, yet he ruled the land; and the land, as the active fruitful element, must overpower the barren sea. Such was the notion: it was fallacious, as will appear later on; but it appealed strongly to the French imagination as providing an infallible means of humbling

the traditional foe. Furthermore, it placed in Napoleon's hands a potent engine of government, not only for assuring his position in France, but for extending his sway over North Germany and all coasts that seemed needful to the success of the experiment.

Indirectly also it seems to have fed, without satisfying, his ever-growing love of power. Here we touch on the difficult question of motive; and it is perhaps impossible, except for dogmatists, to determine whether the enterprises that led to his ruin — the partition of Portugal, which slid easily into the occupation of Spain, together with his Moscow adventure — were prompted by ambition or by a semi-fatalistic feeling that they were necessary to the complete triumph of his Continental System. He himself, with a flash of almost uncanny insight, once remarked to Roederer that his ambition was different from that of other men: for they were slaves to it, whereas it was so interwoven with the whole texture of his being as to interfere with no single process of thought and will. Whether that is possible is a question for psychologists and casuists; but every open-minded student of Napoleon's career must at times pause in utter doubt, whether this or that act was prompted by mad ambition, or followed naturally, perhaps inevitably, from that world-embracing postulate, the Continental System.

England also derived some secondary advantages from this war of the elements. In order to stalemate her mighty foe, she pushed on her colonial conquests so as to control the resources of the tropics, and thus prevent that deadly tilting of the balance landwards which Napoleon strove to effect. And fate decreed that the conquests of English seamen and settlers were to be more enduring than those of Napoleon's legions. While the French were gaining barren victories beyond the Vistula and Ebro, our seamen seized French and Dutch colonies and our pioneers opened up the interior of Australia and South Africa.

We also used our maritime monopoly to depress neutral commerce. We have not space to discuss the complex question of the rights of neutrals in time of war, which would involve an examination of the "rule of 1756" and the compromises arrived at after the two Armed Neu-

trality Leagues. Suffice it to say that our merchants had recently been indignant at the comparative immunity enjoyed by neutral ships, and had pressed for more vigorous action against such as traded to French ports.[1] Yet the statement that our Orders in Council were determined by the clamour of the mercantile class is an exaggeration: they were reprisals against Napoleon's acts, following them in almost geometrical gradations. To his domination over the industrial resources of the Continent we had nothing to oppose but our manufacturing skill, our supremacy in the tropics, and our control of the sea. The methods used on both sides were alike brutal, and, when carried to their logical conclusion at the close of the year, crushed the neutrals between the upper and the nether millstone. But it is difficult to see what other alternative was open to an insular State that was all-powerful at sea and weak on land. Our very existence was bound up with maritime commerce; and an abandonment of the carrying trade to neutrals would have been the tamest of surrenders, at a time when surrender meant political extinction.

We turn now to follow the chief steps in Napoleon's onward march, which enabled him to impose his system on nearly the whole of the Continent. While encamped in the Prussian capital he decreed the deposition of the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, and French and Dutch troops forthwith occupied that Electorate. Towards Saxony he acted with politic clemency; and on December 11th, 1806, the Elector accepted the French alliance, entered the Confederation of the Rhine, and received the title of King.[2]

Meanwhile Frederick William, accompanied by his grief-stricken consort, was striving to draw together an army in his eastern provinces. Some overtures with a view to peace had been made after Jena; but Napoleon

[1] See especially the pamphlet, "War in Disguise, or the Frauds of the Neutral Flags" (1805), by J. Stephen. It has been said that this pamphlet was a cause of the Orders in Council. The whole question is discussed by Manning, "Commentaries on the Law of Nations" (1875); Lawrence, "International Law"; Mahan, "Infl. of Sea Power," vol. ii., pp. 274–277; Mollien, vol. iii., p. 289 (1st edit.); and Chaptal, p. 275.

[2] Häusser, vol. iii., p. 61 (4th edit.). The Saxon federal contingent was fixed at 20,000 men.

finally refused to relax his pursuit unless the Prussians retired beyond the Vistula, and yielded up to him all the western parts of the kingdom, with their fortresses. Besides, he let it be known that Prussia must join him in a close alliance against Russia, with a view to checking her ambitious projects against Turkey; for the Czar, resenting the Sultan's deposition of the hospodars of the Danubian Principalities, an act suggested by the French, had sent an army across the River Pruth, even when the Porte timidly revoked its objectionable firman.[1] The Eastern Question having been thus reopened, Napoleon suggested a Franco-Prussian alliance so as to avert a Russian conquest of the Balkan Peninsula. But now, as ever, his terms to Prussia were too exacting. The King deigned not to stoop to such humiliation, but resolved to stake his all on the courage of his troops and the fidelity of the Czar.

The Russians, though delayed by their distrust of Haugwitz, and by their insensate war with Turkey, were now marching, 73,000 strong, into Prussian Poland, but were too late to save the Silesian fortresses, most of which surrendered to the French. The fighting in the open also went against the allies, though at Pultusk, a town north of Warsaw, the Russians claimed that the contest had been drawn in their favour.

At the close of the year the armies went into winter-quarters. It was high time. The French were ill supplied for a winter campaign amid the desolate wastes of Poland. Snow and rain, frosts and thaws, had turned the wretched tracks into muddy swamps, where men sank to their knees, horses to their bellies, and carriages beyond their axles. The carriage conveying Talleyrand was a whole night stuck fast, in spite of the efforts of ten horses to drag it out. The opinion of the soldiery on Poland and the Poles is well expressed by that prince of *raconteurs*, Marbot: "Weather frightful, victuals very scarce, no wine, beer detestable, water muddy, no bread, lodgings shared with cows and pigs. 'And they call this their country,' said our soldiers."

Yet Polish patriotism had been a mighty power in the world; and Napoleon, ever on the watch for the weak

[1] Papers presented to Parliament, December 22nd, 1806.

places of his foes, saw how effective a lever it might be. This had been his constant practice : he had pitted Italians against Austrians, Copts against Mamelukes, Druses against Turks, Irish against English, South Germans against the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns, and for the most part with success. But, except in the case of the Italian people and the South German princes, he rarely, if ever, bestowed boons proportionate to the services rendered. It is very questionable whether he felt more warmly for Irish nationalists than for Copts and Druses.[1] Except in regard to his Italian kindred, none of the nationalist aspirations that were to mould the history of the century touched a responsive chord in his nature. In this, as in other affairs of state, he held "true policy" to be "nothing else than the calculation of combinations and chances."

It was in this spirit that he surveyed the Polish Question. Arising out of the partitions of that unhappy land by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, it had distracted the repose of Europe scarcely less than the French Revolution ; and now the heir to the Revolution, after hewing his way through the weak monarchies of Central Europe, was about to probe this ulcer of Christendom. As usual, nothing had been done to forestall him. Czartoryski had begged Alexander to declare Russian Poland an autonomous kingdom united with Russia only by the golden link of the crown, but this timely proposal was rejected;[2] and the Czar displayed the weakness of his judgment and the strength of his vanity by plunging into war with Turkey and Persia, at a time when Poland was opening her arms to the victor of a hundred fights. It was, therefore, easy for Napoleon to surround Russia with foes ; and, as will shortly appear, he took steps to invigorate even the remote Persian Empire.

But, above all, he spurred on the Poles to take up arms. His encouragements were discreetly vague. True, he countenanced Polish proclamations, which spoke grandilo-

[1] After the interview of November 28th, 1801, Cornwallis reports that Napoleon "expressed a wish that we could agree to remove disaffected persons from either country . . . and declared his willingness to send away United Irishmen" ("F. O. Records," No. 615).

[2] Czartoryski, "Mems.," vol. ii., ch. xv.

quently of national liberty; but proclamations he ever viewed as the *ballons d'essai* of politics. He also warned Murat not to promise the Poles too much: "My greatness does not depend on the aid of a few thousand Poles. Let them show a firm resolve to be independent: let them pledge themselves to support the King that will be given to them, and then I will see what is to be done."

There were two reasons for this caution. His Marshals found no very general disposition among the Poles to take up arms for France; and he desired not to offend Austria by revolutionizing Galicia and her district south and east of Warsaw. Already the Hapsburgs were nervously mustering their troops, and Napoleon had no wish to tempt fortune by warring against three Powers a thousand miles away from his own frontiers. He therefore calmed the Court of Vienna by promising that he would discourage any rising in Austrian Poland, and he held forth the prospect of regaining Silesia. This tempting offer was made secretly and conditionally; and evoked no expression of thanks, but rather a redoubling of precautions. Yet, despite the efforts of England and Russia, the Hapsburg ruler refused to join the allies: he preferred to play the waiting game which had ruined Prussia.[1]

The campaign was reopened amidst terrible weather by a daring move of Bennigsen's Russians westwards, in the hope of saving Danzig and Graudenz from the French. At first a screen of forests well concealed his advance. But, falling in with Bernadotte near the River Passarge,

[1] In our "F. O. Records," Prussia, No. 74, is a report of Napoleon's reply to a deputation at Warsaw (January, 1807): "I warn you that neither I nor any French prince cares for your Polish throne: I have crowns to give and don't know what to do with them. You must first of all think of giving bread to my soldiers — 'Bread, bread, bread.' . . . I cannot support my troops in this country, where there is no one besides nobles and miserable peasants. Where are your great families? They are all sold to Russia. It is Czartoryski who wrote to Kosciusko not to come back to Poland." And when a Galician deputy asked him of the fate of his province, he turned on him: "Do you think that I will draw on myself new foes for one province." Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of the Poles was not wholly chilled. Their contingents did good service for him. Somewhat later, female devotion brought a beautiful young Polish lady to act as his mistress, primarily with the hope of helping on the liberation of her land, and then as a willing captive to the charm which he exerted on all who approached him. Their son was Count Walewska.

his progress was checked and his design revealed. At once Napoleon prepared to march northwards and throw the Russians into the sea, a plan which in its turn was foiled by the seizure of a French despatch by Cossacks. Bennigsen, now aware of his danger, at once retreated towards Königsberg, but at Eylau turned on his pursuers and fought the bloodiest battle fought in Europe since Malplaquet. The numbers on both sides were probably about equal, numbering some 75,000 men, the Russians having a slight superiority in men and still more in artillery. Driven from Eylau on the night of February 7th after confused fighting, the Muscovite withdrew to a strong position formed by an irregular line of hills, which he crowned with cannon.

As the dawn peered through the snow-laden clouds, guns began to deal death amongst the hostile masses, and heavy columns moved forward. Davoust, on the French right, began to push back the Russians on that side, whereupon Napoleon ordered Augereau's corps to complete the advantage by driving in the enemy's centre. Gallantly the French advanced. Their leading regiment, the 14th, had seized a hillock which commanded the enemy's lines,[1] when, amidst a whirlwind of snow that beat in their faces, a deadly storm of grape and canister almost annihilated the corps. Its shattered lines fell back, leaving the 14th to its fate. But a cloud of Cossacks now swept on the retiring companies, stabbing with their long spears; and it was a scanty band that found safety in their former position. Russian cannon and cavalry also stopped the advance of Davoust, and the fighting for a time resolved itself into confused but murderous charges at close quarters. As if to increase the horrors of the scene, snowstorms again swept over the field, dazing the French and shrouding with friendly wings the fierce charges of Cossacks. Yet the Grand Army fought on with devoted heroism; and the chief, determined to snatch at victory, launched eighty squadrons of horse against the Russian centre. Sweeping aside the Cossacks, and defying the cannon that riddled their files, they poured upon the first line of Russian infantry: for a time they were stemmed,

[1] Marbot, ch. xxviii.

but, finding some weaker places, the cuirassiers burst through, only to be thrown back by the second line ; and, when furiously charged by Cossacks, they fell back in disorder. "These Russians fight like bulls," said the French. The simile was just. Even while Murat was hacking at their centre, a column of 4,000 Russian grenadiers, detaching itself from their mangled line, marched straight forward on the village of Eylau. With the same blind courage that nerved Solmes' division at Steinkirk, they beat aside the French light horse and foot, and were now threatening the cemetery where Napoleon and his staff were standing.

"I never was so much struck with anything in my life," said General Bertrand at St. Helena, "as by the Emperor at Eylau when he was almost trodden under foot by the Russian column. He kept his ground as the Russians advanced, saying frequently, 'What boldness.'"

But, when all around him trembled, and Berthier ordered up the horses as if for retreat, he himself quietly signalled for his Guards. These sturdy troops, long fuming at their inaction, marched forward with a stern joy. As at Steinkirk the French Household Brigade disdained to fire on the bull-dogs, so now the Guards rushed on the Muscovites with the cold steel. The shock was terrible ; but the pent-up fury of the French carried all before it, and the grenadiers were wellnigh destroyed. The battle might still have ended in a French victory ; for Davoust was obstinately holding the village which he had seized in the morning, and even threatened the rear of Bennigsen's centre. But when both sides were wellnigh exhausted, the Prussian General Lestocq with 8,000 men, urged on by the counsels of Scharnhorst, hurried up from the side of Königsberg, marched straight on Davoust, and checked his forward movements. Ney followed Lestocq, but at so great a distance that his arrival at nightfall served only to secure the French left.

Thus darkness closed over some 100,000 men, who wearily clung to their posts, and over snowy wastes where half that number lay dead, dying, or disabled. Well might Ney exclaim : "What a massacre, and without any issue ! " Each side claimed the victory, and, as is usual

in such cases, began industriously to minimize its own and to magnify the enemy's losses. The truth seems to be that both sides had about 25,000 men *hors de combat;* but, as Bennigsen lacked tents, supplies, and, above all, the dauntless courage of Napoleon, he speedily fell back, and thus enabled the Emperor to claim a decisive victory.[1]

Exhausted by this terrific strife, the combatants now relaxed their efforts for a brief space; but while Napoleon used the time of respite in hurrying up troops from all parts of his vast dominions, the allies did little to improve their advantage. This inertness is all the more strange as Prussia and Russia came to closer accord in the Treaty of Bartenstein (April 26th, 1807).[2]

The two monarchs now recur to the generous scheme of a European peace, for which the Czar and William Pitt had vainly struggled two years before. The present war is to be fought out to the end, not so as to humble France and interfere in her internal concerns, but in order to assure to Europe the blessings of a solid peace based on the claims of justice and of national independence. France must be satisfied with reasonable boundaries, and Prussia be restored to the limits of 1805 or their equivalent. Germany is to be freed from the dictation of the French, and become a "constitutional federation," with a boundary "parallel to the Rhine." Austria is to be asked to join the present league, regaining Tyrol and the Mincio frontier. England and Sweden must be rallied to the common cause. The allies will also take steps to cause Denmark to join the league. For the rest, the integrity of Turkey is to be maintained, and the future of Italy decided in concert with Austria and England, the Kings of Sardinia and Naples being restored. Even should Austria, Eng-

[1] Lettow-Vorbeck estimates the French loss at more than 24,000; that of the Russians as still heavier, but largely owing to the bad commissariat and wholesale straggling. On this see Sir R. Wilson's "Campaign in Poland," ch. i.

[2] Napoleon on February 13th charged Bertrand to offer *verbally but not in writing*, to the King of Prussia a separate peace, without respect to the Czar. Frederick William was to be restored to his States east of the Elbe. He rejected the offer, which would have broken his engagements to the Czar. Napoleon repeated the offer on February 20th, which shows that, at this crisis, he did wish for peace with Prussia. See "Nap. Corresp.," No. 11810; and Häusser, vol. iii., p. 74.

land, and Sweden not join them, yet Russia and Prussia will continue the struggle and not lay down their arms save by mutual consent.

Had all the Powers threatened by Napoleon at once come forward and acted with vigour, these ends might, even now, have been attained. But Austria merely renewed her offers of mediation, a well-meaning but hopeless proposal. England, a prey to official incapacity, joined the league, promised help in men and money, and did little or nothing except send fruitless expeditions to Alexandria and the Dardanelles with the aim of forcing the Turks to a peace with Russia. In Sicily we held our own against Joseph's generals, but had no men to spare for a diversion against Marmont's forces in Dalmatia, which Alexander urged. Still less could we send from our own shores any force for the effective aid of Prussia. Though we had made peace with that Power, and ordinary prudence might have dictated the taking of steps to save the coast fortresses, Danzig and Colberg, from the French besiegers, yet our efforts were limited to the despatch of a few cruisers to the former stronghold. Even more urgent was the need of rescuing Stralsund, the chief fortress of Swedish Pomerania. Such an expedition clearly offered great possibilities with the minimum of risk. From the Isle of Rügen Mortier's corps could be attacked; and when Stralsund was freed, a dash on Stettin, then weakly held by the French, promised an easy success that would raise the whole of North Germany in Napoleon's rear.[1]

But arguments were thrown away upon the British Government, which clung to its old plan of doing nothing, and of doing it expensively. The Foreign Secretary, Earl Howick, replied that the allies must not expect any considerable aid from our land forces. Considering that the Income or War Tax of 2*s*. in the £ had yielded close on £20,000,000, and that the army numbered 192,000 men

[1] "I have been repeatedly pressed by the Prussian and Russian governments," wrote Lord Hutchinson, our envoy at Memel, March 9th, 1807, "on the subject of a diversion to be made by British troops against Mortier. . . . Stettin is a large place with a small garrison and in a bad state of defence" ("F. O.," Prussia, No. 74).

(exclusive of those in India), this declaration did not shed lustre on the Ministry of all the Talents. That bankrupt Cabinet, however, was dismissed by George III. in March, 1807, because it declined to waive the question of Catholic Emancipation, and its place was filled by the Duke of Portland, with Canning as Foreign Minister. Soon it was seen that Pitt's cloak had fallen on worthy shoulders, and a new vigour began to inspirit our foreign policy. Yet the bad results of frittering away our forces on distant expeditions could not be wiped out at once. In fact, our military expert, Lord Cathcart, reported that only some 12,000 men could at present be spared for service in the Baltic; and, as it would be beneath our dignity to send so small a force, it would be better to keep it at home ready to menace any part of the French coast. As to Stralsund, he thought that plan was more feasible, but that, even there, the allies would not make head against Mortier's corps.[1]

This is a specimen of the reasoning that was fast rendering Britain contemptible alike to friends and foes. It is not surprising that such timorous selfishness should have at last moved the Czar to say to our envoy: "Act where you please, provided that you act at all."[2] In the end the new Ministry did venture to act: it engaged to send 20,000 men to the succour of Stralsund; but, with the fatality that then dogged our steps, that decision was formed on June the 17th, three days after the Coalition was shattered by the mighty blow of Friedland.

In striking contrast to the faint-hearted measures of the allies was the timely energy of Napoleon in bringing up reinforcements. These were drawn partly from Mortier's corps in Pomerania, now engaged in watching the Swedes, who made a truce; partly from the Bavarians

[1] Lord Cathcart's secret report to the War Office, dated April 22nd, 1807, dealt with the appeal made by Lord Hutchinson, and with a *Projet* of Dumouriez, both of whom strongly urged the expedition to Stralsund. On May 30th Castlereagh received a report from a Hanoverian officer, Kuckuck, stating that Hanover and Hesse were ripe for revolt, and that Hameln might easily be seized if the North Germans were encouraged by an English force ("Castlereagh Letters," vol. vi., pp. 169 and 211).

[2] "F. O.," Russia, No. 69.

and Saxons; but mostly from French troops already in Central Germany, their places being taken by Italians, Spaniards, Swiss, and Dutch. In France a new levy of conscripts was ordered — the third since the outbreak of war with Prussia. The Turks were encouraged to press on the war against Russia and England; and a mission was sent to the Shah of Persia to strengthen his arms against the Czar. To this last we will now advert.

For some time past Napoleon had been coquetting with Persia, and an embassy from the Shah now came to the castle of Finkenstein, a beautiful seat not far from the Vistula, where the Emperor spent the months of spring. A treaty was drawn up, and General Gardane was deputed to draw closer the bonds of friendship with the Court of Teheran. The instructions secretly issued to this officer are of great interest. He is ordered to proceed to Persia by way of Constantinople, to concert an alliance between Sultan and Shah, to redouble Persia's efforts against her "natural enemy," Russia, and to examine the means of invading India. For this purpose a number of officers are sent with him to examine the routes from Egypt or Syria to Delhi, as also to report on the harbours in Persia with a view to a maritime expedition, either by way of Suez or the Cape of Good Hope. The Shah is to be induced to form a corps of 12,000 men, drilled on the European model and armed with weapons sold by France. This force will attack the Russians in Georgia and serve later in an expedition to India. With a view to the sending of 20,000 French troops to India, Gardane is to communicate with the Mahratta princes and prepare for this enterprise by every possible means.

We may note here that Gardane proceeded to Persia and was urging on the Shah to more active measures against Russia when the news of the Treaty of Tilsit diverted his efforts towards the East. At the close of the year he reported to Napoleon that, for the march overland from Syria to the Ganges, Cyprus was an indispensable base of supplies: he recommended the route Bir, Mardin, Teheran, Herat, Cabul, and Peshawur: forty to fifty thousand French troops would be needed, and thirty or forty thousand Persians should also be taken up.

Nothing came of these plans; but it is clear that, even when Napoleon was face to face with formidable foes on the Vistula, his thoughts still turned longingly to the banks of the Ganges.[1]

The result of Napoleon's activity and the supineness of his foes were soon apparent. Danzig surrendered to the French on May the 24th, and Neisse in Silesia a little later; and it was not till the besiegers of these fortresses came up to swell the French host that Bennigsen opened the campaign. He was soon to rue the delay. His efforts to drive the foe from the River Passarge were promptly foiled, and he retired in haste to his intrenched camp at Heilsberg. There, on June the 10th, he turned fiercely at bay and dealt heavy losses to the French vanguard. In vain did Soult's corps struggle up towards the intrenchments; his men were mown down by grapeshot and musketry: in vain did Napoleon, who hurried up in the afternoon, launch the fusiliers of the Guard and a division of Lannes' corps. The Muscovites held firm, and the day closed ominously for the French. It was Eylau over again on a small scale.

But Bennigsen was one of those commanders who, after fighting with great spirit, suffer a relapse. Despite the entreaties of his generals, he had retreated after Eylau; and now, after a day of inaction, his columns filed off towards Königsberg under cover of the darkness. In excuse for this action it has been urged that he had but two days' supply of bread in the camp, and that a forward move of Davoust's corps round his right flank threatened to cut him off from his base of supplies, Königsberg.[2]

The first excuse only exposes him to greater censure. The Russian habit at that time usually was to live almost from hand to mouth; but that a carefully-prepared position like that of Heilsberg should be left without adequate supplies is unpardonable. On the two next days the rival

[1] "Corresp.," No. 12563; also, "La Mission du Gen. Gardane en Perse," par le comte de Gardane. Napoleon, in his proclamation of December 2nd, 1806, told the troops that their victories had won for France her Indian possessions and the Cape of Good Hope.

[2] Wilson, "Campaign in Poland;" "Opérations du 3me Corps [Davoust's], 1806–1807," p. 199.

hosts marched northward, the one to seize, the other to save, Königsberg. They were separated by the winding vale of the Alle. But the course of this river favoured Napoleon as much as it hindered Bennigsen. The Alle below Heilsberg makes a deep bend towards the north-east, then northwards again towards Friedland, where it comes within forty miles of Königsberg, but in its lower course flows north-east until it joins the Pregel.

An army marching from Heilsberg to the old Prussian capital by the right bank would therefore easily be outstripped by one that could follow the chord of the arc instead of the irregular arc itself. Napoleon was in this fortunate position, while the Russians plodded amid heavy rains over the semicircular route further to the east. Their mistake in abandoning Heilsberg was now obvious. The Emperor halted at Eylau on the 13th for news of the Prussians in front and of Bennigsen on his right flank. Against the former he hurled his chief masses under the lead of Murat in the hope of seizing Königsberg at one blow.[1] But, foreseeing that the Russians would probably pass over the Alle at Friedland, he despatched Lannes to Domnau, to see whether they had already crossed in force. Clearly, then, Napoleon did not foresee what the morrow had in store for him: his aim was to drive a solid wedge between Bennigsen and the defenders of Königsberg, to storm that city first, and then to turn on Bennigsen. The claim of some of Napoleon's admirers that he laid a trap for the Russians at Friedland, as he had done at Austerlitz, is therefore refuted by the Emperor's own orders.

None the less did Bennigsen walk into a trap, and one of his own choosing. Anxious to thrust himself between Napoleon and the old Prussian capital, he crossed the river at Friedland, and sought to strengthen his position on the left bank by driving Lannes' vanguard back on Domnau, by throwing three bridges over the stream, and by crowning the hills on the right bank with a formidable artillery. But he had to deal with a tough and daring

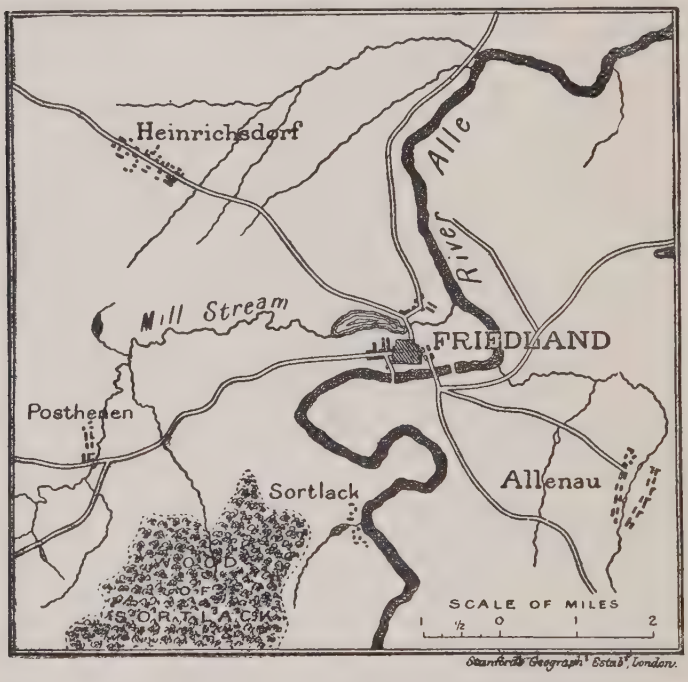
[1] "Corresp.," Nos. 12749 and 12751. Lejeune, in his "Memoirs," also shows that Napoleon's chief aim was to seize Königsberg.

opponent. Throughout the winter Lannes had been a prey to ill-health and resentment at his chief's real or fancied injustice: but the heats of summer reawakened his thirst for glory and restored him to his wonted vigour. Calling up the Saxon horse, Grouchy's dragoons, and Oudinot's grenadiers, he held his ground through the brief hours of darkness. Before dawn he posted his 10,000 troops among the woods and on the plateau of Posthenen that lies to the west of Friedland and strove to stop the march of 40,000 Russians. After four hours of fighting, his men were about to be thrust back, when the divisions of Verdier and Dupas — the latter from Mortier's corps — shared the burden of the fight until the sun was at its zenith. When once more the fight was doubtful, the dense columns of Ney and Victor were to be seen, and by desperate efforts the French vanguard held its ground until this welcome aid arrived.

Napoleon, having received Lannes' urgent appeals for help, now rode up in hot haste, and in response to the cheers of his weary troops repeatedly exclaimed: "To-day is a lucky day, the anniversary of Marengo." Their ardour was excited to the highest pitch, Oudinot saluting his chief with the words: "Quick, sire! my grenadiers can hold no longer: but give me reinforcements and I'll pitch the Russians into the river." [1] The Emperor cautiously gave them pause: the fresh troops marched to the front and formed the first line, those who had fought for nine hours now forming the supports. Ney held the post of honour in the woods on the right flank, nearly above Friedland; behind him was the corps of Bernadotte, which, since the disabling of that Marshal by a wound, had been led by General Victor: there too were the dragoons of Latour-Maubourg and the imposing masses of the Guard. In the centre, but bending in towards the rear, stood the remnant of Lannes' indomitable corps, now condemned for a time to comparative inactivity; and defensive tactics were also enjoined on Mortier and Grouchy on the left wing, until Ney and Victor should decide the fortunes of the second fight. The Russians, as if bent on favouring Napoleon's design, continued to

[1] "Memoirs of Oudinot," ch. ii.

deploy in front of Friedland, keeping up the while a desultory fight; and Bennigsen, anxious now about his communications with Königsberg, detached 6,000 men down the right bank of the river towards Wehlau. Only 46,000 men were thus left to defend Friedland against a force that now numbered 80,000: yet no works were thrown up to guard the bridges — and this after the



arrival of Napoleon with strong reinforcements was known by the excitement along the enemy's front.

Nevertheless, as late as 3 P.M., Napoleon was in doubt whether he should not await the arrival of Murat. At his instructions, Berthier ordered that Marshal to leave Soult at Königsberg and hurry back with Davoust and the cavalry towards Friedland: "If I perceive at the beginning of this fight that the enemy is in too great force, I might be content with cannonading to-day and

awaiting your arrival." But a little later the Emperor decides for instant attack. The omens are all favourable. If driven back, the Russians will fight with their backs to a deep river. Besides, their position is cut in twain by a mill-stream which flows in a gully, and near the town is dammed up so as to form a small lake. Below this lies Friedland in a deep bend of the river itself. Into this *cul-de-sac* he will drive the Russian left, and fling their broken lines into the lake and river.

At five o'clock a salvo of twenty guns opened the second and greater battle of Friedland. To rush on the Muscovite van and clear it from the wood of Sortlack was for Ney's leading division the work of a moment; but on reaching the open ground their ranks were ploughed by the shot of the Russian guns ranged on the hills beyond the river. Staggered by this fire, the division was wavering, when the Russian Guards and their choicest squadrons of horse charged home with deadly effect. But Ney's second division, led by the gallant Dupont, hurried up to restore the balance, while Latour-Maubourg's dragoons fell on the enemy's horsemen and drove them pell-mell towards Friedland.

The Russian artillery fared little better: Napoleon directed Sénarmont with thirty-six guns to take it in flank and it was soon overpowered. Freed now from the Russian grapeshot and sabres, Ney held on his course like a torrent that masters a dam, reached the upper part of the lake, and threw the bewildered foe into its waters or into the town. Friedland was now a death-trap: huddled together, plied by shell, shot, and bayonet, the Russians fought from street to street with the energy of despair, but little by little were driven back on the bridges. No help was to be found there; for Sénarmont, bringing up his guns, swept the bridges with a terrific fire: when part of the Russian left and centre had fled across, they burst into flames, a signal that warned their comrades further north of their coming doom. On that side, too, a general advance of the French drove the enemy back towards the steep banks of the river. But on those open plains the devotion and prowess of the Muscovite cavalry bore ampler fruit: charging the foe while in the full swing

of victory, these gallant riders gave time for the infantry to attempt the dangers of a deep ford: hundreds were drowned, but others, along with most of the guns, stole away in the darkness down the left bank of the river.

On the morrow Bennigsen's army was a mass of fugitives straggling towards the Pregel and fighting with one another for a chance to cross its long narrow bridge. Even on the other side they halted not, but wandered on towards the Niemen, no longer an army but an armed mob. On its banks they were joined by the defenders of Königsberg, who after a stout stand cut their way through Soult's lines and made for Tilsit. There, behind the broad stream of the Niemen, the fugitives found rest.

It will always be a mystery why Bennigsen held on to Friedland after French reinforcements arrived; and the feeling of wonder and exasperation finds expression in the report of our envoy, Lord Hutchinson, founded on the information of two British officers who were at the Russian headquarters:

"Many of the circumstances attending the Battle of Friedland are unexampled in the annals of war. We crossed the River Alle, not knowing whether we had to contend with a corps or the whole French army. From the commencement of the battle it was manifest that we had a great deal to lose and probably little to gain: . . . General Bennigsen would, I believe, have retired early in the day from ground which he ought never to have occupied; but the corps in our front made so vigorous a resistance that, though occasionally we gained a little ground, yet we were never able to drive them from the woods or the village of Heinrichsdorf."[1]

This evidence shows the transcendent services of Lannes, Oudinot, and Grouchy in the early part of the day; and it is clear that, as at Jena, no great battle would have been fought at all but for the valour and tenacity with which Lannes clung to the foe until Napoleon came up.

[1] The report is dated Memel, June 21st, 1807, in "F. O.," Prussia, No. 74. Hutchinson thinks the Russians had not more than 45,000 men engaged at Friedland, and that their losses did not exceed 15,000; but there were "multitudes of stragglers." Lettow-Vorbeck gives about the same estimates. Those given in the French bulletin are grossly exaggerated.

CHAPTER XXVII

TILSIT

Even now matters were not hopeless for the allies. Crowds of stragglers rejoined the colours at Tilsit, and Tartar reinforcements were near at hand. The gallant Gneisenau was still holding out bravely at Kolberg against Brune's divisions; and two of the Silesian fortresses had not yet surrendered. Moreover, Austria seemed about to declare against Napoleon, and there were hopes that before long England would do something. But, above all, since the war was for Prussia solely an affair of honour,[1] it deeply concerned Alexander's good name not to desert an ally to whom he was now pledged by all the claims of chivalry until satisfactory terms could be gained.

But Alexander's nature had not as yet been strengthened by misfortune and religious convictions: it was a sunny background of flickering enthusiasms, flecked now and again by shadows of Eastern cunning or darkened by warlike ambitions — a nature in which the sentimentalism of Rousseau and the passions of a Boyar alternately gained the mastery. No realism is more crude than that of the disillusionized idealist; and for months the young Czar had seen his dream of a free and happy Europe fade away amidst the smoke of Napoleon's guns and the mists of English muddling. At first he blenched not even at the news of Friedland. In an interview with our ambassador, Lord Gower, on June the 17th, he bitterly upbraided him with our inactivity in the Baltic and the Mediterranean, and the non-fulfilment of our promise of a loan; as for

[1] On June 17th, 1807, Queen Louisa wrote to her father: "... we fall with honour. The King has proved that he prefers honour to shameful submission." On June 23rd Bennigsen professed a wish to fight, while secretly advising surrender (Hardenberg, "Mems.," vol. iii., p. 469).

himself, "he would never stoop to Bonaparte: he would rather retire to Kazan or even to Tobolsk." But five days later, acting under pressure from his despairing generals, some of whom reminded him of his father's fate, he arranged an armistice with the conqueror.[1] Five days only were allowed in which Prussia might decide to follow his example or proceed with the war alone. She accepted the inevitable on the following day.

The international situation was now strangely like that which followed immediately upon the battle of Austerlitz. Then it was Prussia, now it was Austria, that played the part of the cautious friend at the very time when the beaten allies were meditating surrender. For some time past the Court of Vienna had been offering its services for mediation; they were well received at London, with open disappointment by Prussia, and with ill-concealed annoyance by Napoleon. As at the time when Haugwitz came to him to dictate Prussia's terms, so now the Emperor kept the Austrian envoy waiting without an answer, until the blow of Friedland was dealt.[2] Even then Austria seemed about to enter the lists, when news arrived of the conclusion of the armistice of Tilsit. This enabled her to sheathe her sword with no loss of honour; but, as was the case with Prussia at the close of 1805, her conduct was seen to be timid and time-serving; and it merited the secret rebuke of Canning that she "was (as usual) just ten days too late in her determination, or the world might have been saved."[3]

Whether Austria had been beguiled by the recent diplomatic caresses of Napoleon may well be doubted; for they were obviously aimed at keeping her quiet until he had settled scores with Prussia and Russia. His advances only began on the eve of the last war, and the sharpness of the transition from threats to endearments

[1] "F. O.," Russia, No. 69. Soult told Lord Holland ("Foreign Reminiscences," p. 185) that Bennigsen was plotting to murder the Czar, and he (S.) warned him of it.

[2] "Lettres inédites de Talleyrand," p. 468; also Garden, vol. x., pp. 205–210; and "Ann. Reg." (1807), pp. 710–724, for the British replies to Austria.

[3] Canning to Paget ("Paget Papers," vol. ii., p. 324). So too Canning's despatch of July 21st to Gower (Russia, No. 69).

could not be smoothed over even by Talleyrand's finesse.[1] When the slaughter at Eylau placed him in peril, he again bade Talleyrand soothe the Austrian envoy with assurances that, if his master was anxious to maintain the integrity of Turkey, France would maintain it; or if he desired to share in an eventual partition, France would also arrange that to his liking.[2] But as the prospects for the campaign improved, Napoleon's tone hardened. On March the 14th he states that he has enough men to keep Austria quiet and to "get rid of the Russians in a month." And now he looks on an alliance with the Hapsburgs merely as giving a short time of quiet, whereas an alliance with Russia would be "very advantageous."[3] He had also felt the value of alliance with Prussia, as his repeated overtures during the campaign testify; but when Frederick William persistently rejected all accommodation with the man who had so deeply outraged his kingly honour, he turned finally to Alexander.

The Czar was made of more pliable stuff. Moreover, he now cherished one sentiment that brought him into sympathy with Napoleon, namely, hatred of England. He certainly had grave cause for complaint. We had done nothing to help the allies in the Polish campaign except to send a few cruisers and 60,000 muskets, which last did not reach the Swedish and Russian ports until the war was over. True, we had gone out of our way to attack Constantinople at his request; but that attack had failed; and our attitude towards his Turkish policy was one of veiled suspicion, varied with moral lectures.[4] As for the loan of five millions sterling which the Czar had asked us to guarantee, we had put him off, our envoy finally reminding him that it had been of the first importance to help Austria to move. Worst of all, our cruisers had seized some Russian merchantmen coming out of French ports, and despite protests from St. Petersburg the legality

[1] Stadion saw through it. See Beer, p. 243.

[2] "Nap. Corresp.," No. 11918.

[3] *Ib.*, No. 12028. This very important letter seems to me to refute M. Vandal's theory ("Nap. et Alexandre," ch. i.), that Napoleon was throughout seeking for an alliance with *Austria*, or Prussia, or Russia.

[4] Canning to Paget, May 16th, 1807 ("Paget Papers," vol. ii., p. 290).

of that seizure was maintained. Thus, in a war which concerned our very existence we had not rendered him a single practical service, and yet strained the principles of maritime law at the expense of Russian commerce.[1]

Over against our policy of blundering delay there was that of Napoleon, prompt, keen, and ever victorious. The whole war had arisen out of the conflict of these two Powers; and Napoleon had never ceased to declare that it was essentially a struggle between England and the Continent. After Eylau Alexander was proof against these arguments; but now the triumphant energy of Napoleon and the stolid apathy of England brought about a quite bewildering change in Russian policy. Delicate advances having been made by the two Emperors, an interview was arranged to take place on a raft moored in the middle of the River Niemen (June 25th).

"I hate the English as much as you do, and I will second you in all your actions against them." Such are said to have been the words with which Alexander greeted Napoleon as they stepped on to the raft. Whereupon the conqueror replied: "In that case all can be arranged and peace is made."[2] As the two Emperors were unaccompanied at that first interview, it is difficult to see on what evidence this story rests. It is most unlikely that either Emperor would divulge the remarks of the other on that occasion; and the words attributed to Alexander seem highly impolitic. For what was his position at this time? He was striving to make the best of a bad case against an opponent whose genius he secretly feared. Besides, we know for certain that he was most anxious to postpone his rupture with England for some months.[3] All desire for an immediate break was on Napoleon's side.

We can therefore only guess at what transpired, from the vague descriptions of the two men themselves. They

[1] Garden, vol. x., pp. 214–218; and Gower's despatch of June 17th, 1807 (Russia, No. 69).

[2] All references to the story rest ultimately on Bignon, "Hist. de France" (vol. vi., p. 316), who gives no voucher for it. For the reasons given above I must regard the story as suspect. Among a witty, phrase-loving people like the French, a good *mot* is almost certain to gain credence and so pass into history.

[3] Tatischeff, "Alexandre I et Napoléon" (pp. 144–148).

MEETING OF NAPOLEON AND THE CZAR ALEXANDER AT TILSIT ON A RAFT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER NIEMEN.

From an engraving after a coloured drawing by Debret.

are characteristic enough: "I never had more prejudices against anyone than against *him*," said Alexander afterwards; "but, after three-quarters of an hour of conversation, they all disappeared like a dream"; and later he exclaimed: "Would that I had seen him sooner: the veil is torn aside and the time of error is past." As for Napoleon, he wrote to Josephine: "I have just seen the Emperor Alexander: I have been very pleased with him: he is a very handsome, good, and young Emperor: he has an intellect above what is commonly attributed to him."[1] The tone of these remarks strikes the keynote of all the conversations that followed. At the next day's conference, also held in the sumptuous pavilion erected on the raft, the King of Prussia was present; but towards him Napoleon's demeanour was cold and threatening. He upbraided him with the war, lectured him on the duty of a king to his people, and bade him dismiss Hardenberg. Frederick William listened for the most part in silence; his nature was too stiff and straightforward to practise any Byzantine arts; but when his trusty Minister was attacked, he protested that he should not know how to replace him. Napoleon had foreseen the plea and at once named three men who would give better advice. Among them was the staunch patriot Stein!

From the ensuing conferences the King was almost wholly excluded. They were held in a part of the town of Tilsit which was neutralized for that purpose, as also for the guards and diplomatists of the three sovereigns. There, too, lived the two Emperors in closest intercourse, while on most days the Prussian King rode over from a neighbouring village to figure as a sad, reproachful guest at the rides, parades, and dinners that cemented the new Franco-Russian alliance. Yet, amid all the melodious raptures of Alexander over Napoleon's newly discovered virtues, it is easy to detect the clinging ground-tone of Muscovite ambition. An event had occurred which excited the hopes of both Emperors. At the close of May, the Sultan Selim was violently deposed by the Janissaries, who clamoured for more vigorous measures against the

[1] Reports of Savary and Lesseps, quoted by Vandal, *op. cit.*, p. 61; "Corresp.," No. 12825.

Russians. Never did news come more opportunely for Napoleon than this, which reached him at Tilsit on, or before, June the 24th. He is said to have exclaimed to the Czar with a flash of dramatic fatalism: "It is a decree of Providence which tells me that the Turkish Empire can no longer exist."[1]

Certain it is that the most potent spell exerted by the great conqueror over his rival was a guarded invitation to share in some future partition of the Turkish Empire. That scheme had fascinated Napoleon ever since the year 1797, when he gazed on the Adriatic. Though laid aside for a time in 1806, when he roused the Turks against Russia, it was never lost sight of; and now, on the basis of a common hatred of England and a common desire to secure the spoils of the Ottoman Power, the stately fabric of the Franco-Russian alliance was reared.

On his side, Alexander required some assurance that Poland should not be reconstituted in its integrity — a change that would tear from Russia the huge districts stretching almost up to Riga, Smolensk, and Kiev, which were still Polish in sympathy. Here Napoleon reassured him, at least in part. He would not re-create the great kingdom of Poland: he would merely carve out from Prussia the greater part of her Polish possessions.

These two important questions being settled, it only remained for the Czar to plead for the King of Prussia, to acknowledge Napoleon's domination as Emperor of the West, while he himself, as autocrat of the East, secured a better western boundary for Russia. At first he strove to gain for Frederick William the restoration of several of his lands west of the Elbe. This championship was not wholly disinterested; for it is now known that the Czar had set his heart on a great part of Prussian Poland.

In truth, he was a sufficiently good disciple of the French revolutionists to plead very cogently his claims to a "natu-

[1] Vandal, p. 73, says that the news reached Napoleon at a review when Alexander was by his side. If so, the occasion was carefully selected with a view to effect; for the news reached him on, or before, June 24th (see "Corresp.," No. 12819). Gower states that the news reached Tilsit as early as the 15th; and Hardenberg secretly proposed a policy of partition of Turkey on June 23rd ("Mems.," vol. iii., p. 463). Hardenberg resigned office on July 4th, as Napoleon refused to treat through him.

ral frontier." He disliked a "dry frontier": he must have a riverine boundary: in fact, he claimed the banks of the Lower Niemen, and, further south, the course of the rivers Wavre, Narew, and Bug. To this claim he had perhaps been encouraged by some alluring words of Napoleon that thenceforth the Vistula must be the boundary of their empires. But his ally was now determined to keep Russia away from the old Polish capital; and in strangely prophetic words he pointed out that the Czar's claims would bring the Russian eagles within sight of Warsaw, which would be too clear a sign that that city was destined to pass under the Russian rule.[1] Divining also that Alexander's plea for the restoration by France of some of Prussia's western lands was linked with a plan which would give Russia some of her eastern districts,[2] Napoleon resolved to press hard on Prussia from the west. While handing over to the Czar only the small district around Bialystock, he remorselessly thrust Prussia to the east of the Elbe.

From this neither the arguments of the Czar nor the entreaties of Queen Louisa availed to move him. And yet, in the fond hope that her tears might win back Magdeburg, that noble bulwark of North German independence, the forlorn Queen came to Tilsit to crave this boon (July 6th). It was a terrible ordeal to do this from the man who had repeatedly insulted her in his official journals, figuring her, first as a mailed Amazon galloping at the head of her regiment, and finally breathing forth scandals on her spotless reputation.

Yet, for the sake of her husband and her people, she braced herself up to the effort of treating him as a gentleman and appealing to his generosity. If she was able to conceal her loathing, this was scarcely so with her devoted lady in waiting, the Countess von Voss, who has left us an acrid account of Napoleon's visit to the Queen at the miller's house at Tilsit.[3]

[1] "Corresp.," No. 12862, letter of July 6th.

[2] Tatischeff (pp. 146–148 and 163–168) proves from the Russian archives that these schemes were Alexander's, and were in the main opposed by Napoleon. This disproves Vandal's assertion (p. 101) that Napoleon pressed Alexander to take the Memel and Polish districts.

[3] "Erinnerungen der Gräfin von Voss."

"He is excessively ugly, with a fat swollen sallow face, very corpulent, besides short and entirely without figure. His great eyes roll gloomily around; the expression of his features is severe; he looks like the incarnation of fate: only his mouth is well shaped, and his teeth are good. He was extremely polite, talked to the Queen a long time alone. . . . Again, after dinner, he had a long conversation with the Queen, who also seemed pretty well satisfied with the result."[1]

Queen Louisa's verdict about his appearance was more favourable: she admired his head "as that of a Cæsar." With winsome boldness inspired by patriotism, she begged for Magdeburg. Taken aback by her beauty and frankness, Napoleon had recourse to compliments about her dress. "Are we to talk about fashion, at such a time?" was her reply. Again she pleaded, and again he fell back on vapidities. Nevertheless, her appeals to his generosity seemed to be thawing his statecraft, when the entrance of that unlucky man, her husband, gave the conversation a colder tone. The dinner, however, passed cheerfully enough; and, according to French accounts, Napoleon graced the conclusion of dessert by offering her a rose. Her woman's wit flew to the utterance: "May I consider it a token of friendship, and that you grant my request for Magdeburg?" But he was on his guard, parried her onset with a general remark as to the way in which such civilities should be taken, and turned the conversation. Then, as if he feared the result of a second interview, he hastened to end matters with the Prussian negotiators.[2]

He thus described the interview in a letter to Josephine:

"I have had to be on my guard against her efforts to oblige me to some concessions for her husband; but I have been gallant, and have held to my policy."

This was only too clear on the following day, when the Queen again dined with the sovereigns.

[1] Probably this refers not to the restitution of Silesia, which he politely offered to her (though he had previously granted it on the Czar's request), but to Magdeburg and its environs west of the Elbe. On July 7th he said to Goltz, the Prussian negotiator, "I am sorry if the Queen took as positive assurances the *phrases de politesse* that one speaks to ladies" (Hardenberg's "Mems.," vol. iii., p. 512).

[2] See the new facts published by Bailleu in the "Hohenzollern Jahrbuch" (1899). The "rose" story is not in any German source.

"Napoleon," says the Countess von Voss, "seemed malicious and spiteful, and the conversation was brief and constrained. After dinner the Queen again conversed apart with him. On taking leave she said to him that she went away feeling it deeply that he should have deceived her. My poor Queen: she is quite in despair."

When conducted to her carriage by Talleyrand and Duroc, she sank down overcome by emotion. Yet, amid her tears and humiliation, the old Prussian pride had flashed forth in one of her replies as the rainbow amidst the rain-storm. When Napoleon expressed his surprise that she should have dared to make war on him with means so utterly inadequate, she at once retorted: "Sire, I must confess to Your Majesty, the glory of Frederick the Great had misled us as to our real strength" — a retort which justly won the praise of that fastidious connoisseur, Talleyrand, for its reminder of Prussia's former greatness and the transitoriness of all human grandeur.[1]

On that same day (July 7th) the Treaty of Tilsit was signed. Its terms may be thus summarized. Out of regard for the Emperor of Russia, Napoleon consented to restore to the King of Prussia the province of Silesia, and the old Prussian lands between the Elbe and Niemen. But the Polish lands seized by Prussia in the second and third partitions were (with the exception of the Bialystock district, now gained by Russia) to form a new State called the Duchy of Warsaw. Of this duchy the King of Saxony was constituted ruler. Danzig, once a Polish city, was now declared a free city under the protection of the Kings of Prussia and Saxony, but the retention there of a French garrison until the peace, made it practically a French fortress. Saxe-Coburg, Oldenburg, and Mecklenburg-Schwerin were restored to their dukes, but the two last were to be held by French troops until England made peace with France. With this aim in view, Napoleon accepted Alexander's mediation for the conclusion of a treaty of peace with England, provided that she accepted that mediation within one month of the ratification of the present treaty.

[1] In his "Memoirs" (vol. i., pt. iii.) Talleyrand says that he repeated this story several times at the Tuileries, until Napoleon rebuked him for it.

On his side, the Czar now recognized the recent changes in Naples, Holland, and Germany; among the last of these was the creation of the Kingdom of Westphalia for Jerome Bonaparte out of the Prussian lands west of the Elbe, the Duchy of Brunswick, and the Electorate of Hesse-Cassel. Holland gained East Frisia at the expense of Prussia. As regards Turkey, the Czar pledged himself to cease hostilities at once, to accept the mediation of Napoleon in the present dispute, and to withdraw Russian troops from the Danubian Provinces as soon as peace was concluded with the Sublime Porte. Finally, the two Emperors mutually guaranteed the integrity of their possessions and placed their ceremonial and diplomatic relations on a footing of complete equality.

Such were the published articles of the Treaty of Tilsit. Even if this had been all, the European system would have sustained the severest blow since the Thirty Years' War. The Prussian monarchy was suddenly bereft of half its population, and now figured on the map as a disjointed land, scarcely larger than the possessions of the King of Saxony, and less defensible than Jerome Bonaparte's Kingdom of Westphalia; while the Confederation of the Rhine, soon to be aggrandized by the accession of Mecklenburg and Oldenburg, seemed to doom the House of Hohenzollern to lasting insignificance.[1]

But the published treaty was by no means all. There were also secret articles, the chief of which were that the Cattaro district — to the west of Montenegro — and the Ionian Islands should go to France, and that the Czar would recognize Joseph Bonaparte as King of Sicily when Ferdinand of Naples should have received "an indemnity such as the Balearic Isles, or Crete, or their equivalent." Also, if Hanover should eventually be annexed to the Kingdom of Westphalia, a Westphalian district with a population of from three to four hundred thousand souls would be retroceded to Prussia. Finally, the chiefs of the Houses of Orange-Nassau, Hesse-Cassel, and Brunswick were to receive pensions from Murat and Jerome Bonaparte, who dispossessed them.

[1] Before Tilsit Prussia had 9,744,000 subjects, afterwards only 4,938,000. See her frontiers in map on p. 225.

Most important of all was the secret treaty of alliance with Russia, also signed on July 7th, whereby the two Emperors bound themselves to make common cause in any war that either of them might undertake against any European Power, employing, if need be, the whole of their respective forces. Again, if England did not accept the Czar's mediation, or if she did not, by the 1st of December, 1807, recognize the perfect equality of all flags at sea, and restore her conquests made from France and her allies since 1805, then Russia would make war on her. In that case, the present allies will "summon the three Courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon to close their ports against the English and declare war against England. If any one of the three Courts refuse, it shall be treated as an enemy by the high contracting parties, and if Sweden refuse, *Denmark shall be compelled to declare war on her.*" Pressure would also be put on Austria to follow the same course. But if England made peace betimes, she might recover Hanover, on restoring her conquests in the French, Spanish, and Dutch colonies. Similarly, if Turkey refused the mediation of Napoleon, he would in that case help Russia to drive the Turks from Europe — "the city of Constantinople and the province of Roumelia alone excepted."[1]

The naming of the city of Constantinople, which is in Roumelia, betokens a superfluity of prudence. But it helps to confirm the statement of Napoleon's secretary, M. Méneval, that the future of that city led to a decided difference of opinion between the Emperors. After one of their discussions, Napoleon stayed poring over a map, and finally exclaimed, "Constantinople! Never! It is the empire of the world." Doubtless it was on this subject that Alexander cherished some secret annoyance. Certain it is that, despite all his professions of devotion to Napoleon, he went back to St. Petersburg ill at ease and possessed with a certain awe of the conqueror. For what had he gained? He received a small slice of Prussian Poland, and the prospect of aggrandizement on the side of

[1] The exact terms of the secret articles and of the secret treaty have only been known since 1890, when, owing to the labours of MM. Fournier, Tatischeff, and Vandal, they saw the light.

Turkey and Sweden, Finland being pointed out as an easy prey. For these future gains he was to close his ports to England and see his commerce, his navy, and his seaboard suffer. It is not surprising that before leaving Tilsit he remarked to Frederick William that "the most onerous condition imposed by Napoleon was common to Russia and Prussia."[1]

This refers to the compulsion put upon them to join Napoleon's Continental System. In the treaty signed with Prussia on July 9th, Napoleon not only wrested away half her lands, but required the immediate closing of all her ports to British vessels. We may also note here that, by the extraordinary negligence of the Prussian negotiator, Marshal Kalckreuth, the subsequent convention as to the evacuation of Prussia by the French troops left open a loophole for its indefinite occupation. Each province or district was to be evacuated when the French requisitions had been satisfied.[2] The exaction of impossible sums would therefore enable the conquerors, quite legally, to keep their locust swarms in that miserable land. And that was the policy pursued for sixteen months.

Why this refinement of cruelty to his former ally? Why not have annexed Prussia outright? Probably there were two reasons against annexation: first, that his army could live on her in a way that would not be possible with his own subjects or allies; second, that the army of occupation would serve as a guarantee both for Russia's good faith and for the absolute exclusion of British goods from Prussia.[3] This had long been his aim. He now attained it, but only by war that bequeathed a legacy of war, and a peace that was no peace.

[1] Gower's despatch of July 12th. "F. O.," Russia, No. 69.

[2] De Clercq, "Traités," vol. ii., pp. 223–225; Garden, vol. x., p. 233 and 277–290. Our envoy, Jackson, reported from Memel on July 28th: "Nothing can exceed the insolence and extortions of the French. No sooner is one demand complied with than a fresh one is brought forward."

[3] That he seriously thought in November, 1807, of leaving to Prussia less than half of her already cramped territories, is clear from his instructions to Caulaincourt, his ambassador to the Czar: "Is it not to Prussia's interest for her to place herself, at once, and with entire resignation, among the inferior Powers?" A new treaty was to be framed, under the guise of *interpreting* that of Tilsit, Russia keeping the Danubian Provinces, and Napoleon more than half of Prussia (Vandal, vol. i., p. 509).

Napoleon's behaviour at Tilsit has generally been regarded, at least in England, as prompted by an insane lust of power; and the treaty has been judged as if its aim was the domination of the Continent. But another explanation, though less sweeping and attractive, seems more consonant with the facts of the case.

He hoped that, before so mighty a confederacy as was framed at Tilsit, England would bend the knee, give up not only her maritime claims but her colonial conquests, and humbly take rank with Powers that had lived their day. The conqueror who had thrice crumpled up the Hapsburg States, and shattered Prussia in a day, might well believe that the men of Downing Street, expert only in missing opportunities and exasperating their friends, would not dare to defy the forces of united Europe, but would bow before his prowess and grant peace to a weary world. In his letter of July 6th, 1807, to the Czar, he advised the postponement of the final summons to the British Government, because it would "give five months in which the first exasperation will die down in England, and she will have time to understand the immense consequences that would result from so imprudent a struggle." Neither Napoleon nor Alexander was deaf to generous aspirations. They both desired peace, so that their empires might expand and consolidate. Above all, France was weary of war; and by peace the average Frenchman meant, not respite from Continental strifes that yielded a surfeit of barren glories, but peace with England. The words of Lucchesini, the former Prussian ambassador in Paris, on this subject are worth quoting:

> "The war with England was at bottom the only one in which the French public took much interest, since the evils it inflicted on France were felt every moment: nothing was spoken of so decidedly among all classes of the people as the wish to have done with that war; and when one spoke of peace at Paris, one always meant peace with England: peace with the others was as indifferent to the public as the victories or the conquests of Bonaparte."[1]

If the French middle classes longed for a maritime peace so that coffee and sugar might become reasonably cheap,

[1] Lucchesini to Gentz in October, 1806, in Gentz's "Ausgewählte Schriften," vol. v., p. 257.

how much more would their ruler, whose heart was set on colonies and a realm in the Orient? In Poland he had cheered his troops with the thought that they were winning back the French colonial empire; and, as we have seen, he was even then preparing the ground in Persia for a future invasion of India. These plans could only be carried out after a time of peace that should rehabilitate the French navy. Humanitarian sentiment, patriotism, and even the promptings of a wider ambition, therefore bade him strive for a general pacification, such as he seemed to have assured at Tilsit.

But the means which he adopted were just those that were destined to defeat this aim. Where he sought to intimidate, he only aroused a more stubborn resistance: where he should have allayed national fears, he redoubled them. He did not understand our people: he saw not that, behind our official sluggishness and muddling, there was a quenchless national vitality, which, if directed by a genius, could defy a world-wide combination. If, instead of making secret compacts with the Czar and trampling on Prussia; if, instead of intriguing with the Sultan and the Shah, and thus reawakening our fears respecting Egypt and India, he had called a Congress and submitted all the present disputes to general discussion, there is reason to think that Great Britain would have received his overtures. George III.'s Ministers had favoured the proposal of a Congress when put forward by Austria in the spring;[1] and they would doubtless have welcomed it from Napoleon after Friedland, had they not known of far-reaching plans which rendered peace more risky than open war. This great genius had, in fact, one fatal defect; he had little faith except in outward compulsion; and his superabundant energy of menace against England blighted the hopes of peace which he undoubtedly cherished.

Long before Alexander's offer of mediation was forwarded to London, our Ministers had taken a sudden and desperate resolution. They determined to compel Denmark to join England and Sweden, and to hold the fleet at Copenhagen as a gauge of Danish fidelity.

[1] See Canning's reply to Stahremberg's Note, on April 25th, 1807, in the "Ann. Reg.," p. 724.

That momentous resolve was formed on or just before July the 16th, in consequence of news that had arrived from Memel and Tilsit. The exact purport of that news, and the manner of its acquisition, have been one of the puzzles of modern history. But the following facts seem to furnish a solution. Our Foreign Office Records show that our agent at Tilsit, Mr. Mackenzie, who was on confidential terms with General Bennigsen, left post haste for England immediately after the first imperial interview; and the news which he brought, together with reports of the threatening moves of the French on Holstein, clinched the determination of our Government to checkmate the Franco-Russian aims by bringing strong pressure to bear on Denmark. To keep open the mouth of the Baltic was an urgent necessity, otherwise we should lose touch with the Anglo-Swedish forces campaigning against the French near Stralsund.[1] Furthermore, it should be noted that Denmark held the balance in naval affairs. France and her allies now had fifty-nine sail of the line ready for sea: the compact with the Czar would give her twenty-four more; and if Napoleon seized the eighteen Danish and nine Portuguese battleships, his fighting strength would be nearly equal to our own.[2] Canning therefore determined, on July 16th, to compel Denmark to side with us, or at least to observe a neutrality favourable to the British cause; and, to save her honour, he proposed to send an irresistible naval force.

"Denmark's safety," he wrote on July 16th, "is to be found, under the present circumstances of the world, only in a balance of opposite dangers. For it is not to be disguised that the influence which France has acquired from recent events over the North of Europe, might, unless balanced by the naval power of Great Britain, leave to Denmark no other option than that of compliance with the demands of Bonaparte."[3]

A balance of opposite dangers! In this phrase Canning summed up his policy towards Denmark. Threatened by

[1] For Mackenzie's report and other details gleaned from our archives, see my article "A British Agent at Tilsit," in the "Eng. Hist. Rev." of October, 1901.

[2] James, "Naval History," vol. iv., p. 408.

[3] "F. O.," Denmark, No. 53.

Napoleon on the land, she was to be threatened by us from the sea; and Canning hoped that these opposite forces would, at least, secure Danish neutrality, without which Sweden must succumb in her struggle against France. That some compulsion would be needed had long been clear. In fact, the use of compulsion had first been recommended by the Russian and Prussian Governments, which had gone so far as to include in the Treaty of Bartenstein a proposal of common action, along with England, Austria, and Sweden, *to compel Denmark to side with the allies against Napoleon.*[1] To this resolve England still clung, despite the defection of the Czar. In truth, his present conduct made the case for the coercion of Denmark infinitely more urgent.

As to the reality of Napoleon's designs on Denmark, there can be no doubt. After his return to France, he wrote from St. Cloud, directing Talleyrand to express his displeasure that Denmark had not fulfilled her *promises*: "Whatever my desire to treat Denmark well, I cannot hinder her suffering from having allowed the Baltic to be violated [by the English expedition to Stralsund]; and, if England refuses Russia's mediation, Denmark must choose either to make war against England, or against me."[2] Whence it is clear that Denmark had given Napoleon grounds for hoping that she would declare the Baltic a *mare clausum*.

The British Government had so far fathomed these designs as to see the urgency of the danger. Accordingly it proposed to Denmark a secret defensive alliance, the chief terms of which were the handing over of the Danish fleet, to be kept as a "sacred pledge" by us till the peace, a subsidy of £100,000 paid to Denmark for that fleet, and the offer of armed assistance in case she should be attacked by France. This offer of defensive alliance was repulsed, and the Danish Prince Royal determined to resist even

[1] Garden, vol. x., p. 408.

[2] "Corresp.," No. 12962; see too No. 12936, ordering the 15,000 Spanish troops now serving him near Hamburg to form the nucleus of Bernadotte's army of observation, which, "in case of events," was to be strengthened by as many Dutch.

the mighty armada which was now nearing his shores. Towards the close of August, eighty-eight British ships were in the Sound and the Belt; and when the transports from Rügen and Stralsund joined those from Yarmouth, as many as 15,400 troops were at hand, under the command of Lord Cathcart. A landing was effected near Copenhagen, and offers of alliance were again made, including the deposit of the Danish fleet; "but if this offer is rejected now, it cannot be repeated. The captured property, public and private, must then belong to the captors: and the city, when taken, must share the fate of conquered places." The Danes stoutly repelled offers and threats alike: the English batteries thereupon bombarded the city until the gallant defenders capitulated (September 7th). The conditions hastily concluded by our commanders were that the British forces should occupy the citadel and dockyard for six weeks, should take possession of the ships and naval stores, and thereupon evacuate Zealand.

These terms were scrupulously carried out; and at the close of six weeks our forces sailed away with the Danish fleet, including fifteen sail of the line, fifteen frigates, and thirty-one small vessels. This end to the expedition was keenly regretted by Canning. In a lengthy Memorandum he left it on record that he desired, not merely Denmark's fleet, but her alliance. In his view nothing could save Europe but a firm Anglo-Scandinavian league, which would keep open the Baltic and set bounds to the designs of the two Emperors. Only by such an alliance could Sweden be saved from Russia and France. Indeed, foreseeing the danger to Sweden from a French army acting from Zealand as a base, Canning proposed to Gustavus that he should occupy that island, or, failing that, receive succour from a British force on his own shore of the Sound. But both offers were declined. The final efforts made to draw Denmark into our alliance were equally futile, and she kept up hostilities against us for nearly seven years. All that resulted, then, from Canning's action was the hatred of a brave people and the possession of their fleet; and our statesman, while blaming the precipitate action of our commanders in insisting solely upon the surrender of the fleet,

declared that that action, apart from an Anglo-Danish alliance, was "an act of great injustice."[1]

And as such it has been generally regarded, that is, by those who did not, and could not, know the real state of the case. In one respect our action was unpardonable: it was not the last desperate effort of a long period of struggle: it came after a time of selfish torpor fatal alike to our reputation and the interests of our allies. After protesting their inability to help them, Ministers belied their own words by the energy with which they acted against a small State. And the prevalent opinion found expression in the protests uttered in Parliament that it would have been better to face the whole might of the French, Russian, and Danish navies than to emulate the conduct of those who had overrun and despoiled Switzerland.

Moreover, our action did not benefit Sweden, but just the reverse. Cathcart's force, that had been helping the Swedes in the defence of their Pomeranian province, was withdrawn in order to strengthen our hands against Copenhagen. Thereupon the gallant Gustavus, overborne by the weight of Marshal Brune's corps, sued for an armistice. It was granted only on the condition that Stralsund should pass into Brune's hands (August 20th); and the Swedes, unable even to hold Rügen, were forced to give up that island also. Sick in health and weary of a world that his chivalrous instincts scorned, Gustavus withdrew his forces into Sweden. Even there he was menaced. The hostilities which Denmark forthwith commenced against England and Sweden exposed his southern coasts; but he now chose to lean on the valour of his own subjects rather than on the broken reed of British assistance, and awaited the attacks of the Danes on the west and of the Russians on his province of Finland.

The news from Copenhagen also furnished the Czar

[1] "F. O.," Denmark, No. 53. I published this Memorandum of Canning and other unpublished papers in an article, "Canning and Denmark," in the "Eng. Hist. Rev." of January, 1896. The terms of the capitulation were, it seems, mainly decided on by Sir Arthur Wellesley, who wrote to Canning (September 8th): "I might have carried our terms higher . . . had not our troops been needed at home." ("Well. Despatches," vol. iii., p. 7).

with a good excuse for hostilities with England. For such an event he had hitherto been by no means desirous. On his return from Tilsit to St. Petersburg he found the nobility and merchants wholly opposed to a rupture with the Sea Power, the former disdaining to clasp the hand of the conqueror of Friedland, the latter foreseeing ruin from the adoption of the Continental System; and when Napoleon sent Savary on a special mission to the Czar's Court, the Empress-Mother and nobles alike showed their abhorrence of "the executioner of the Duc d'Enghien." In vain were imperial favours lavished on this envoy. He confessed to Napoleon that only the Czar and the new Foreign Minister, Romantzoff, were favourable to France; and it was soon obvious that their ardour for a partition of Turkey must disturb the warily balancing policy which Napoleon adopted as soon as the Czar's friendship seemed assured.

The dissolution of this artificial alliance was a task far beyond the powers of British statesmanship. To Alexander's offer of mediation between France and England Canning replied that we desired first to know what were "the just and equitable terms on which France intended to negotiate," and secondly what were the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit. That there were such was obvious; for the published treaty made no mention of the Kings of Sardinia and of the two Sicilies, in whom Alexander had taken so deep an interest. But the second request annoyed the Czar; and this feeling was intensified by our action at Copenhagen. Yet, though he pronounced it an act of "unheard-of violence," the Russian official notes to our Government were so far reassuring that Lord Castlereagh was able to write to Lord Cathcart (September 22nd): "Russia does not show any disposition to resent or to complain of what we have done at Copenhagen. . . . The tone of the Russian cabinet has become much more conciliatory to us since they heard of your operations at Copenhagen."[1] It would seem, however, that this double-

[1] Castlereagh's "Corresp.," vol. vi. So too Gower reported from St. Petersburg on October 1st that public opinion was "decidedly averse to war with England, . . . and it appears to me that the English name was scarcely ever more popular in Russia than at the present time."

dealing was prompted by naval considerations. The Czar desired to temporize until his Mediterranean squadron should gain a place of safety and his Baltic ports be encased in ice; but on the 27th October (8th November, N.S.) he broke off all communications with us, and adopted the Continental System.

Meanwhile, at the other extremity of Europe, events were transpiring that served as the best excuse for our harshness towards Denmark. Even before our fleet sailed for the Sound, Napoleon was weaving his plans for the destruction of Portugal. It is clear that he designed to strike her first before taking any action against Denmark. During his return journey from Tilsit to Paris, he directed Talleyrand to send orders to Lisbon for the closing of all Portuguese ports against British goods by September the 1st — "in default of which I declare war on Portugal." He also ordered the massing of 20,000 French troops at Bayonne in readiness to join the Spanish forces that were to threaten the little kingdom.[1]

What crime had Portugal committed? She had of late been singularly passive: anxiously she looked on at the gigantic strifes that were engulfing the smaller States one by one. Her conduct towards Napoleon had been far less provocative than that of Denmark towards England. Threatened with partition by him and Spain in 1801, she had eagerly snatched at peace, and on the rupture of the Peace of Amiens was fain to purchase her neutrality at the cost of a heavy subsidy to France, which she still paid in the hope of prolonging her "existence on sufferance."[2] That hope now faded away.

As far back as February, 1806, Napoleon had lent a ready ear to the plans which Godoy, the all-powerful Minister at Madrid, had proposed for the partition of Portugal; and, in the month of July following, Talleyrand held out to our plenipotentiary at Paris the threat that, unless England speedily made peace with France, Napoleon would annex Switzerland — "but still less can

[1] Letters of July 19th and 29th.

[2] The phrase is that of Viscount Strangford, our ambassador at Lisbon ("F. O.," Portugal, No. 55). So Baumgarten, "Geschichte Spaniens," vol. i., p. 136.

we alter, for any other consideration, our intention of invading Portugal. The army destined for that purpose is already assembling at Bayonne." A year's respite was gained for the House of Braganza by the campaigns of Jena and Friedland. But, now, with the tenacity of his nature, the Emperor returned to the plan, actually tried in 1801 and prepared for in 1806, of crushing our faithful ally in order to compel us to make peace. On this occasion he counted on certain success, as may be seen by the following extract from the despatch of the Portuguese ambassador at Paris to his Government:

"On Sunday afternoon [August 2nd] there was a diplomatic Levée. The Emperor came up to me as I stood in the circle, and in a low voice said: 'Have you written to your Court? Have your despatched a courier with my final determination?' — I replied in the affirmative. — 'Very well,' said the Emperor, 'then by this time your Court knows that she must break with England before the 1st of September. It is the only way to accelerate peace.' — As the place did not permit discussion on my part, I answered: 'I should think, Sire, that England must now be sincerely anxious to make peace.' — 'Oh,' replied the Emperor, 'we are very certain of that: however, in all cases, you must break either with England or France before the 1st of September.' — He then turned about and addressed himself to the Danish Minister, as far as I could judge to the same purport."[1]

Equally confident is Napoleon's tone in the lately published letter of September 7th:

"As soon as I received news of the English expedition against Copenhagen,[2] I caused Portugal to be informed that all her ports must be closed to England, and I massed an army of 40,000 men at Bayonne to join the Spaniards in enforcing this action, if necessary. But a letter I have just received from the Prince Regent [of Portugal] leads me to presume that this last measure will not be necessary, that the Portuguese ports will be closed to the English by the time this is read, and that Portugal will have declared war against England. On the other hand, my flotilla will be ready for action on 1st October, and I shall have a large army at Boulogne, ready to attempt a *coup de main* on England."

[1] Report of the Portuguese ambassador, Lourenço de Lima, dated August 7th, 1807, inclosed by Viscount Strangford ("F. O.," Portugal, No. 55).

[2] This statement as to the date of the summons to Portugal is false: it was July 19th when he ordered it to be sent, that is, long before the Copenhagen news reached him.

The letter concludes by ordering that all British diplomatists are to be driven *out of Europe*, and that Sweden must make common cause with France and Russia. Such were the means to be used for forcing affrighted Peace again to visit this distracted earth.

In truth, the fate of the British race seemed for the time to hang upon the events at Copenhagen and Lisbon. Very much depended on the action of the Prince Regent of Portugal. Had he tamely submitted to Napoleon's ukase and placed his fleet and his vast colonial empire at the service of France, it is doubtful whether even the high-souled Canning would not have stooped to surrender in face of odds so overwhelming. The young statesman's anxiety as to the action of Portugal is attested by many a long and minutely corrected despatch to Viscount Strangford, our envoy at Lisbon. But, fortunately for us, Napoleon committed the blunder which so often marred his plans: he pushed them too far: he required the Prince Regent to adopt a course of conduct repellent to an honourable man, namely, to confiscate the merchandise and property of British merchants who had long trusted the good faith of the House of Braganza. To this last demand the prince opposed a dignified resistance, though on all other points he gave way. This will appear from Lord Strangford's despatch of August 13th:

". . . The Portuguese Ministers place all their hopes of being able to ward off this terrible blow in the certainty which they entertain of England being obliged to enter into negotiations for a general peace. . . . The very existence of the Portuguese Monarchy depends on the celerity with which England shall meet the pacific interference of the Emperor of Russia. The Prince Regent gives the most solemn promise that he will not on any account consent to the measure of confiscating the property of British subjects residing under his protection. But I think that if France could be induced to give up this point, and limit her demands to the exclusion of British commerce from Portugal, the Government of this country would accede to them. . . ."

A week later he states that Portugal begged England to put up with a temporary rupture, and reports that a quantity of diamonds had been taken out of the Treasury and sent to Paris to be distributed in presents to persons supposed to possess influence over the minds of Bona-

parte and Talleyrand. It would be interesting to trace the history of these diamonds. But, as Napoleon had recently awarded sums amounting in all to 26,582,000 francs from out of the estates confiscated in Poland,[1] signs of sudden affluence were widespread in Paris and rendered it difficult to detect the receivers of the gems. Talleyrand was the usual recipient of such *douceurs*. But on August the 14th he had retired from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, gaining the title of Vice Grand-Elector; and, if we are to be guided, not by the statements of his personal foes, Hauterive and Pasquier, but by the determination which he is known to have formed at Tilsit, that he would not be "the executioner of Europe," we may judge that he disapproved of the barbarous treatment meted out to Prussia and now planned against Portugal.[2]

As has been stated above, the partition of this kingdom had been planned by Godoy in concert with Napoleon early in 1806. That pampered minion of the Spanish Court, angry at the shelving of plans which promised to yield him a third of Portugal, called Spain to arms while Napoleon was marching to Jena, an affront which the conqueror seemed to overlook but never really forgave. Now, however, he appeared wholly to enter into Godoy's scheme; and, while the Prince Regent of Portugal was appealing to his pity, the Emperor (September 25th, 1807) charged Duroc to confer with Godoy's confidential agent at Paris, Don Izquierdo. ". . . As for Portugal, I make no difficulty about granting to the King of Spain a suzerainty over Portugal, and even taking part of it away for the Queen of Etruria and the Prince of the Peace [Godoy]."

[1] "Corresp.," No. 12839.

[2] See Lady Blennerhasset's "Talleyrand," vol. ii., ch. xvi., for a discussion of Talleyrand's share in the new policy. This question, together with many others, cannot be solved, owing to Talleyrand's destruction of most of his papers. In June, 1806, he advised a partition of Portugal; and in the autumn he is said to have favoured the overthrow of the Spanish Bourbons. But there must surely be some connection between Napoleon's letter to him of July 19th, 1807, on Portuguese affairs and the resignation which he persistently offered on their return to Paris. On August 10th he wrote to the Emperor that that letter would be the last act of his Ministry ("Lettres inédites de Tall.," p. 476). He was succeeded by Champagny.

Duroc was also to point out the difficulty, now that "all Italy" belonged to Napoleon, of allowing "that deformity," the kingdom of Etruria, to disfigure the peninsula. The change would, in fact, doubly benefit the French Emperor. It would enable him completely to exclude British commerce from the port of Leghorn, where it was trickling in alarmingly, and also to place the mouths of the Tagus and Douro in the hands of obedient vassals.

Such was the scheme in outline. Despite the offer of the Prince Regent to obey all Napoleon's behests except that relating to the seizure of British subjects and their property, war was irrevocably resolved on by October the 12th.[1] And on October the 27th a secret convention was signed at the Palace of Fontainebleau for arranging "the future lot of Portugal by a healthy policy and conformably to the interests of France and Spain." Portugal was now to be divided into three very unequal parts: the largest portion, comprising Estremadura, Beira, and Tras-os Montes, was reserved for a future arrangement at the general peace, but meanwhile was to be held by France: Algarve and Alemtejo were handed over to Godoy; while the diminutive province of Entre Minho e Bouro was flung as a sop to the young King of Etruria and his consort, a princess of the House of Spain, to console them for the loss of Etruria. A vague promise was made that the House of Braganza might be reinstated in the first of these three portions, in case England restored Gibraltar, Trinidad, and other colonies taken by her from Spain or her allies; and Napoleon guaranteed to the King of Spain his possessions in Europe, exclusive of the Balearic Isles, offering also to recognize him as Emperor of the Two Americas.

Meanwhile Junot was leading his army corps from Bayonne towards Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo, to give effect to this healthful arrangement. This general, whom it was desirable to remove from Paris on account of his rather too open *liaison* with one of the Bonaparte princesses, was urged to the utmost speed and address by the Emperor. He must cover the whole 200 leagues in thirty-five days; lack of provisions must not hinder the march,

[1] "Corresp.," Nos. 13235, 37, 43.

for "20,000 men can live anywhere, even in a desert"; and, above all, as the Prince Regent had again offered to declare war on England, he (Junot) could represent that he came as an ally: "I have already informed you that my intention in authorizing you to enter that land as an ally was to enable you to seize its fleet, but that my mind was fully made up to take possession of Portugal."[1] Lisbon, in fact, was to be served as Venice was ten years before, the lion donning the skin of the fox so as to effect a peaceful seizure. But that ruse could hardly succeed twice. The Prince Regent had his ships ready for flight. The bluff and headstrong Junot, nicknamed "the tempest" by the army, was too artless to catch the prince by guile; but he hurried his soldiers over mountains and through flooded gorges until, on November 30th, 1,500 tattered, shoeless, famished grenadiers straggled into Lisbon — to find that the royal quarry had flown.

The Prince Regent took this momentous resolve with the utmost reluctance. For many weeks he had clung to the hope that Napoleon would spare him; and though he accepted a convention with England, whereby he gained the convoy of our men-of-war across the Atlantic and the promise of aggrandizement in South America, he still continued to temporize, and that too, when a British fleet was at hand in the Tagus strong enough to thwart the designs of the Russian squadron there present to prevent his departure. When the French were within two days' march of Lisbon, Lord Strangford feared that the Portuguese fleet would be delivered into their hands; and only after a trenchant declaration that further vacillation would be taken as a sign of hostility to Great Britain, did the Prince Regent resolve to seek beyond the seas the independence which was denied to him in his own realm.[2]

[1] "Corresp.," Nos. 13314 and 13327. So too, to General Clarke, his new Minister of War, he wrote: "Junot may say anything he pleases, so long as he gets hold of the fleet" ("New Letters of Nap.," October 28th, 1807).

[2] Strangford's despatches quite refute Thiers' confident statement that the Portuguese answers to Napoleon were planned in concert with us. I cannot find in our archives a copy of the Anglo-Portuguese Convention signed by Canning on October 22nd, 1807; but there are many references to it in his despatches. It empowered us to occupy Madeira; and our fleet did so at the close of the year. In April next we exchanged it for the Azores and Goa.

Few scenes are more pathetic than the departure of the House of Braganza from the cradle of its birth. Love for the Prince Regent as a man, mingled with pity for the demented Queen, held the populace of Lisbon in tearful silence as the royal family and courtiers filed along the quays, followed by agonized groups of those who had decided to share their trials. But silence gave way to wails of despair as the exiles embarked on the heaving estuary and severed the last links with Europe. Slowly the fleet began to beat down the river in the teeth of an Atlantic gale. Near the mouth the refugees were received with a royal salute by the British fleet, and under its convoy they breasted the waves of the ocean and the perils of the future.

The conduct of England towards Denmark and that of Napoleon towards Portugal call for a brief comparison. Those small kingdoms were the victims of two powerful States whose real or fancied interests prompted them to the domination of the land and of the sea. But when we compare the actions of the two Great Powers, important differences begin to reveal themselves. England had far more cause for complaint against Denmark than Napoleon had against Portugal. The hostility of the Danes to the recent coalition was notorious. To compel them to change their policy without loss of national honour, we sent the most powerful armada that had ever left our shores, with offers of alliance and a demand that their fleet, the main object of Napoleon's designs, should be delivered up to be held in deposit. The offer was refused, and we seized the fleet. The act was brutal, but it was at least open and above board, and the capitulation of September 7th was scrupulously observed, even when the Danes prepared to renew hostilities.

On the other hand, the demands of Napoleon on the Court of Lisbon were such as no honourable prince could accept; they were relentlessly pressed on in spite of the offer of the Prince Regent to meet him in every particular save one; the appeals of the victim were deliberately used by the aggressor to further his own rapacious designs; and the enterprise fell short of ending in a massacre only because the glamour of the French arms so

dazzled the susceptible people of the south that, for the present, they sank helplessly away at the sight of two battalions of spectres. Finally, Portugal was partitioned — or rather it was kept entirely by Napoleon; for, after the promises of partition had done their work, the sleeping partners in the transaction were quietly shelved, and it was then seen that Portugal had finally served as the bait for ensnaring Spain. To this subject we shall return in the next chapter.

In Italy also, the Juggernaut car of the Continental System rolled over the small States. The Kingdom of Etruria, which in 1802 had served as an easy means of buying the whole of Louisiana from the Spanish Bourbons, was now wrested from that complaisant House, and in December was annexed to the French Empire.

The Pope also passed under the yoke. For a long time the relations between Pius VII. and Napoleon had been strained. Gentle as the Pontiff was by nature, he had declined to exclude all British merchandise from his States, or to accept an alliance with Eugène and Joseph. He also angered Napoleon by persistently refusing to dissolve the marriage of Jerome Bonaparte with Miss Paterson; and an interesting correspondence ensued, culminating in a long diatribe which Eugène was charged to forward to the Vatican as an extract from a private letter of Napoleon to himself.[1] Pius VII. was to be privately warned that Napoleon had done more good to religion than the Pope had done harm. Christ had said that His Kingdom was not of this world. Why then did the Pope set himself above Christ? Why did he refuse to render to Cæsar that which was Cæsar's? — A fortnight later the Emperor advised Eugène to despatch troops in the direction of Bologna — "and if the Pope commits an imprudence, it will be a fine opportunity for depriving him of the Roman States."

No imprudence was committed. Yet, in the following January, Napoleon ordered his troops to occupy Rome, alleging that the Eternal City was a hotbed of intrigues fomented by England and the ex-Queen of Naples, that Neapolitan rebels had sought an asylum in the Papal

[1] "Corresp.," July 22nd, 1807.

States, and that, though he had no wish to deprive the Pope of his territories, yet he must include him in his "system." When Pius VII. refused to commit himself to a policy which would involve war with England, Napoleon ordered that his lands east of the Apennines should be annexed to the Kingdom of Italy (April 2nd, 1808). Napoleon thus gained complete control over the Adriatic coasts, which, along with the island of Corfu, had long engaged his most earnest attention.[1]

True to his aim of forcing or enticing all maritime States into a mighty confederacy for the humiliation of England, Napoleon had given most heed to lands possessing extensive sea-boards. Northern Italy, Holland, Naples, North Germany, Prussia, Russia, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, and Central Italy had, in turn, adopted his system. On Austria he exerted a less imperious pressure; for her coast-line of Trieste and Croatia was so easily controlled by his Italian and Dalmatian territories that English merchandise with difficulty found admittance. Yet, in order to carry out there also his policy of "Thorough," he brought the arguments of Paris and St. Petersburg to bear on the Court of Vienna; and on February 18th, 1808, Austria was enrolled in a league that might well be called continental; for in the spring of that year it embraced every land save Sweden and Turkey.

His activity at this time almost passes belief. While he fastened his grip on the Continent, gallicized the institutions of Italy and Germany, and almost daily instructed his brothers in the essentials of successful statecraft, he found time to turn his thoughts once more to the East, and to mark every device of England for lengthening her lease of life. Noticing that we had annulled our blockade of the Elbe and Weser, with the aim of getting our goods introduced there by neutral ships, Napoleon charged his Finance Minister, Gaudin, to pre-

[1] Between September 1st, 1807, and November 23rd, 1807, he wrote eighteen letters on the subject of Corfu, which he designed to be his base of operations as soon as the Eastern Question could be advantageously reopened. On February 8th, 1808, he wrote to Joseph that Corfu was more important than Sicily, and that "*in the present state of Europe, the loss of Corfu would be the greatest of disasters.*" This points to his proposed partition of Turkey.

pare a decree for pressing hard on neutrals who had touched at any of our ports or carried wares that could be proved to be of British origin.[1]

He was perfectly correct in his surmise that English goods were about to be sent into the Continent extensively on neutral vessels. After the consequences of the Treaty of Tilsit had been fully developed, that was almost their only means of entry. "In August, September, and October, British commerce lay prostrate and motionless until a protecting and self-defensive system was interposed by our Orders in Council."[2] The first of these ordered reprisals against the new Napoleonic States (November 4th): a week later came a second which declared that, as the Orders of January had not induced the enemy to relax his commercial hostilities, but these were now enforced with increased rigour, any port whence the British flag was excluded would be treated as if it were actually blockaded; that is, the principle of the legality of a nominal blockade, abandoned in 1801, was now reaffirmed. The carriage of hostile colonial products was likewise prohibited to neutrals, though certain exceptions were allowed. Also any neutral vessel carrying "certificates of origin" — a device for distinguishing between British and neutral goods — was to be considered a lawful prize of war. A third Order in Council of the same date allowed goods to be imported into the United Kingdom from a hostile port in neutral ships, subject to the ordinary duties, and bonding facilities were granted for the re-exportation of such goods to any friendly or neutral port.[3] These orders were designed to draw neutral commerce through our ports, and to give secret facilities for the carriage of our goods by neutrals, while pressing upon those that obeyed Napoleon's system.

The harshest of them was that which encouraged the searching of neutral vessels for certificates of origin — a

[1] Letter of October 13th, 1807.

[2] "Ann. Register" for 1807, pp. 227, 747.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 749–750. Another Order in Council (November 25th) allowed neutral ships a few more facilities for colonial trade, and Prussian merchantmen were set free (*ibid.*, pp. 755–759). In April, 1809, we further favoured the carrying of British goods on neutral ships, especially to or from the United States.

measure as severe as the confiscation of British property by Napoleon, which it was designed to defeat. And we may note here that the friction resulting from our Orders in Council and our enforcement of the right of search led to the United States passing a Non-Intercourse Act (December 23rd, 1807) that precluded active hostilities against us. It also led Napoleon to confiscate all American ships in his harbours after April 17th, 1808.

The November Orders in Council soon drew a reply from Napoleon. He heard of them during a progress through the north of Italy, and from Milan he flung back his retort, the famous Milan Decrees of November 23rd and December 17th. He thereby declared every neutral ship, which submitted to those orders, to be denationalized and good prize of war ; and the same doom was pronounced against every vessel sailing to or from any port in the United Kingdom or its colonies or possessions. But these measures were not to affect ships of those States that compelled Great Britain to respect their flag. The islanders might well be dismayed at the prospect of a seclusion which promised to recall the Virgilian line :

"Penitus a toto divisos orbe Britannos."

Yet they resolved to pit the resources of the outer world against the militarism of Napoleon ; and, drawing the resources of the tropics to the new power-looms of Lancashire and Yorkshire, they might well hope to pour their unequalled goods into Europe from points of vantage such as Sicily, Gibraltar, the Channel Islands, and Heligoland. There were many Englishmen who believed that the November Orders in Council brought nothing but harm to our cause. They argued that our manufactured goods must find their way into the Continent in spite of the Berlin Decrees ; and they could point to the curious fact that Bourrienne, Napoleon's agent at Hamburg, when charged to procure fifty thousand overcoats for the French army during the Eylau campaign, was obliged to buy them from England.[1]

[1] Bourrienne, "Memoirs." The case against the Orders in Council is fairly stated by Lumbroso, and by Alison, ch. 50.

The incident certainly proves the folly of the Continental System. And if we had had to consult our manufacturing interests alone, a policy of *laisser faire* would doubtless have been the best. England, however, prided herself on her merchant service : to that she looked as the nursery for the royal navy : and the abandonment of the world's carrying trade to neutrals would have seemed an act of high treason. Her acts of retaliation against the Berlin Decrees and the policy of Tilsit were harsh and high-handed. But they were adopted during a pitiless commercial strife ; and, in warfare of so novel and desperate a kind, acts must unfortunately be judged by their efficacy to harm the foe rather than by the standards of morality that hold good during peace. Outwardly, it seemed as if England were doomed. She had lost her allies and alienated the sympathies of neutrals. But from the sea she was able to exert on the Napoleonic States a pressure that was gradual, cumulative, and resistless ; and the future was to prove the wisdom of the words of Mollien : "England waged a warfare of modern times ; Napoleon, that of ancient times. There are times and cases when an anachronism is fatal."

Moreover, at the very time when the Emperor was about to complete his great experiment by subduing Sweden and preparing for the partition of Turkey, it sustained a fatal shock by the fierce rising of the Spanish people against his usurped authority.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SPANISH RISING

The relations of Spain to France during the twelve years that preceded the rising of 1808 are marked by acts of folly and unmanly complaisance that promised utterly to degrade a once proud and sensitive people. They were the work of the senile and spiritless King, Charles IV., of his intriguing consort, and, above all, of her paramour, the all-powerful Minister Godoy. Of an ancient and honourable family, endowed with a fine figure, courtly address, and unscrupulous arts, this man had wormed himself into the royal confidence; and after bringing about a favourable peace with France in 1795, he was styled The Prince of the Peace.

In the next year the meaning of the French alliance was revealed in the treaty of St. Ildefonso, which required Spain to furnish troops, ships, and subsidies for the war against England, a state of vassalage which was made harder by Napoleon. The results are well known. After being forced by him to cede Trinidad to us at the Peace of Amiens, she sacrificed her navy at Trafalgar, saw her colonies and commerce decay and her finances shrivel for lack of the golden streams formerly poured in by Mexico and Peru.

In the summer of 1806, while sinking into debt and disgrace, the Court of Madrid heard with indignation of Napoleon's design to hand over the Balearic Isles to the Spanish Bourbons whom he had driven from Naples and proposed to drive from Sicily. At once Spanish pride caught fire and clutched at means of revenge.[1] Godoy was further incensed by the sudden abandonment of the plans which he had long discussed with Napoleon for the

[1] Gower reported (on September 22nd) that the Spanish ambassador at St. Petersburg had been pleading for help there, so as to avenge this insult.

partition of Portugal, plans which gave him the prospect of reigning as King over the southern portion of that realm.[1] Accordingly, when the Emperor was entering upon the Jena campaign, he summoned the Spanish people to arms in a most threatening manner. The news of the collapse of Prussia ended his bravado. Complaisance again reigned at Madrid, and 15,000 Spaniards were sent, at Napoleon's demand, to serve on the borders of Denmark, while the autocrat of the West perfected his plans against the Iberian Peninsula. As was noted in the previous chapter, the Emperor renewed his offers of a partition of Portugal in the early autumn of 1807; and in pursuance of the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau, Junot's corps marched through Spain into Portugal, where they were helped by a Spanish corps.

It is significant that, as early as October 17th, 1807, Napoleon ordered his general to send a detailed description of the country and of his line of march, the engineer officers being specially charged to send sketches, "*which it is important to have.*" Other French divisions then crossed the Pyrenees, under plea of keeping open Junot's communications with France; and spies were sent to observe the state of the chief Spanish strongholds. Others were charged to report on the condition of the Spanish army and the state of public opinion; while Junot was cautioned to keep a sharp watch on the Spanish troops in Portugal, to allow no fortress to be in their hands, and to send all the Portuguese troops away to France. Thus, in the early days of 1808, Napoleon had some 20,000 troops in Portugal, about 40,000 in the north of Spain, and 12,000 in Catalonia. By various artifices they gained admission into the strongholds of Pamplona, Monjuik, Barcelona, St. Sebastian, and Figueras, so that by the month of March the north and west of the peninsula had passed quietly into his hands, while the greater part of the Spanish army was doing his work in Portugal or on the shores of the Baltic.[2]

These proceedings began to arouse alarm and discontent

[1] Baumgarten, "Geschichte Spaniens," vol. i., p. 138.

[2] "Nap. Corresp." of October 17th and 31st, November 13th, December 23rd, 1807, and February 20th, 1808; also Napier, "Peninsular War," bk. i., ch. ii.

among the Spanish people; but on its Government their influence was as benumbing as that which the boa-constrictor exerts on its prey. In vain did Charles IV. and Godoy strive to set a limit to the numbers of the auxiliaries that poured across the Pyrenees to help them against fabled English expeditions. In vain did they beg that the partition of Portugal might now proceed in accordance with the terms of the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau. The King was curtly told that affairs were not yet ripe for the publication of that treaty.[1] And the growing conviction that he had been duped poured gall into the cup of family bitterness that had long been full to overflowing.

The scandalous relations of the Queen with Godoy had deeply incensed the heir to the throne, Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias. His attitude of covert opposition to his parents and their minion was strengthened by the influence of his bride, a daughter of the ex-Queen of Naples, and their palace was the headquarters of all who hoped to end the degradation of the kingdom. As later events were to prove, Ferdinand had not the qualities of courage and magnanimity that command general homage; but it was enough for his countrymen that he opposed the Court. In 1806 his consort died; and on October 11th, 1807, without consulting his father, he secretly wrote to Napoleon, requesting the hand of a Bonaparte princess in marriage, and stating that such an alliance was the ardent wish of all Spaniards, while they would abhor his union with a sister of the Princess of the Peace. To this letter Napoleon sent no reply. But Charles IV. had some inkling of the fact that the prince had been treating direct with Napoleon; and this, along with another unfilial action of the prince, furnished an excuse for a charge of high treason. It was spitefully pressed home and was revoked only on his humble request for the King's pardon.

Now, this "School for Scandal" was being played at Madrid at the time when Napoleon was arranging the partition of Portugal; and the schism in the Spanish royal House may well have strengthened his determination to end its miserable existence and give a good government to Spain. At the close of the so-called palace plot, Charles

[1] Letter of January 10th, 1808.

IV. informed his august ally of *that frightful attempt*, and begged him to *give the aid of his lights and his counsels*.[1] The craven-hearted King thus himself opened the door for that intervention which Napoleon had already meditated. His resolve now rapidly hardened. At the close of January, 1808, he wrote to Junot asking him: "If unexpected events occurred in Spain, what would you fear from the Spanish troops? Could you easily rid yourself of them?"[2] On February the 20th he appointed Murat, Grand Duke of Berg, to be his Lieutenant in Spain and commander of the French forces. The choice of this bluff, headstrong cavalier, who had done so much to provoke Prussia in 1806, certainly betokened a forward policy. Yet the Emperor continued to smile on the Spanish Court, and gave a sort of half sanction to the union of Ferdinand with a daughter of Lucien Bonaparte.[3] In fact, the hope of this alliance was now used to keep quiet the numerous partisans of Ferdinand, while Murat advanced rapidly towards Madrid. To his Lieutenant the Emperor wrote (March 16th): "Continue your kindly talk. Reassure the King, the Prince of the Peace, the Prince of Asturias, the Queen. The chief thing is to reach Madrid, to rest your troops and replenish your provisions. Say that I am about to come so as to arrange matters."

As to Napoleon's real aims, Murat was in complete ignorance; and he repeatedly complained of the lack of confidence which a brother-in-law had a right to expect. But while the Grand Duke of Berg beamed on the Spaniards with meaningless affability, Izquierdo, Godoy's secret agent at Paris, troubled his master with gloomy reports of the deepening reserve and lowering threats of Ministers at Paris. There was talk of requiring from Spain the cession of her lands between the Pyrenees and the Ebro: there were even dark suggestions as to the need of dethroning the Spanish Bourbons once for all. Interpreting these hints in the light of their own consciences, the King, Queen, and favourite saw themselves in imagination flung

[1] Letter of Charles IV. to Napoleon of October 29th, 1807, published in "Murat, Lieutenant de l'Empereur en Espagne," Appendix viii.

[2] "New Letters of Napoleon."

[3] "Corresp.," letter of February 25th.

forth into the Atlantic, a butt to the scorn of mankind; and they prepared to flee to the New World betimes, with the needful treasure.

But there, too, Napoleon forestalled them. On February 21st a secret order was sent to a French squadron to anchor off Cadiz and stop the King and Queen of Spain if they sought to "repeat the scene of Lisbon."[1] Their escape to America would be even more favourable to England than the flight of the Court of Lisbon had been; and Napoleon took good care that the King, to whom he had awarded the title of Emperor of the two Americas, should remain a prisoner in Europe. Scared, however, by the approach of Murat and the news from Paris, Charles still prepared for flight; and the Queen's anxiety to save her favourite from the growing fury of the populace also bent her desires seawards.

The Court was at the palace of Aranjuez, not far from Madrid, and it seemed easy to escape into Andalusia, and to carry away, by guile or by force, the heir to the throne. But Ferdinand, who hoped for deliverance at the hands of the French, thwarted the scheme by a timely hint to his faithful guards. At once his partisans gathered round him; and the people, rushing to Godoy's residence, madly ransacked it in the hope of tearing to pieces the author of the nation's ruin. After thirty-six hours' concealment, Godoy ventured to steal forth; at once he was discovered, was kicked and beaten; and only the intervention of Ferdinand, prompted by the agonized entreaties of his mother, availed to save the dregs of that wretched life. The roars of the crowd around the palace, and the smashing of the royal carriage, now decided the King to abdicate; and he declared that his declining years and failing health now led him to yield the crown to Ferdinand (March 19th, 1808).

Loud was the acclaim that greeted the young King when he entered Madrid; but the rejoicings were soon damped by the ambiguous behaviour of Murat, who, on entering Madrid at the head of his troops, skilfully evaded any recognition of Ferdinand as King. In fact, Murat had received (March 21st) a letter from Charles IV.'s daugh-

[1] Thiers, notes to bk. xxix. Murat in 1814 told Lord Holland ("Foreign Reminiscences," p. 131) he had had no instructions from Napoleon.

ter begging for his help to her parents at Aranjuez; and it soon transpired that the ex-King and Queen now repented of their abdication, which they represented as brought about by force and therefore null and void. The Grand Duke of Berg saw the advantage which this dispute might give to Napoleon; and he begged the Emperor to come immediately to Madrid for the settlement of matters on which he alone could decide. To this Napoleon replied (March 30th) commending his Lieutenant's prudence, and urging him to escort Charles IV. to the Escurial as King, while Godoy was also to be protected and sent to Bayonne.

To this town the Emperor set out on April the 2nd, as though he would thence proceed to Madrid. Ferdinand, meanwhile, was treated with guarded courtesy that kept alive his hope of an alliance with a French princess. To favour this notion, Napoleon despatched the wariest of his agents, Savary, who artfully persuaded him to meet the Emperor at Burgos. He succeeded, and even induced him to continue his journey to Vittoria. At that place the citizens sought to cut the traces of the royal carriage, so much did they fear treachery if he proceeded further. Yet the young King, beguiled by the Emperor's letter of April 16th, which offered the hand of a French princess, prolonged his journey, crossed the frontier, and was received by Napoleon at Bayonne (April 20th). His arguments, proving that his father's abdication had been voluntary, fell on deaf ears. The Emperor invited him to dinner, and afterwards sent Savary to inform him that he must hand back the crown to his father. To this Ferdinand returned a firm refusal; and his advisers, Escoiquiz and Labrador, ventured to warn the Emperor that the Spaniards would swear eternal hatred to France if he tampered with the crown of Spain. Napoleon listened good-humouredly, pulled Escoiquiz by the ear as a sign of his personal regard, and added: "You are a deep fellow; but, I tell you, the Bourbons will never let me alone." On the next day he offered Ferdinand the throne of Etruria. It was coldly declined.[1]

[1] "Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Révolution d'Espagne, par Nellerto"; also "The Journey of Ferdinand VII. to Bayonne," by Escoiquiz.

Charles IV., his Queen, and Godoy, arrived at Bayonne at the close of April. The ex-King had offered to put himself and his claim in Napoleon's hands, which was exactly what the Emperor desired. The feeble creature now poured forth his bile on his disobedient son, and peevishly bade him restore the crown. Ferdinand assented, provided his father would really reign, and would dismiss those advisers who were hated by the nation; but the attempt to impose conditions called forth a flash of senile wrath, along with the remark that "one ought to do everything *for* the people and nothing *by* the people."

Meanwhile the men of Madrid were not acting with the passivity desired by their philosophizing monarch. At first they had welcomed Murat as delivering them from the detested yoke of Godoy; but the conduct of the French in their capital, and the detention of Ferdinand at Bayonne, aroused angry feelings, which burst forth on May the 2nd, and long defied the grapeshot of Murat's guns and the sabres of his troopers. The news of this so-called revolt gave Napoleon another handle against his guests. He hurried to Charles and cowed him by well-simulated signs of anger, which that *roi fainéant* thereupon vented on his son, with a passion that was only outdone by the shrill gibes of the Queen. At the close of this strange scene, the Emperor interposed with a few stern words, threatening to treat the prince as a rebel if he did not that very evening restore the crown to his father. Ferdinand braved the parental taunts in stolid silence, but before the trenchant threats of Napoleon he quailed, and broke down.

Resistance was now at an end. On that same night (May 5th) the Emperor concluded with Godoy a convention whereby Charles IV. agreed to hand over to Napoleon the crowns of Spain and the Indies, on consideration that those dominions should remain intact, should keep the Roman Catholic faith to the exclusion of all others, and that he himself should be pensioned off with the estates of Compiègne and Chambord, receiving a yearly income of seven and a half million francs, payable by the French treasury. The Spanish princes were similarly treated, Ferdinand signing away his rights for a castle and a pension. To crown the farce, Napoleon ordered Talleyrand

to receive them at his estate of Valençay, and amuse them with actors and the charms of female society. Thus the choicest humorist of the age was told off to entertain three uninteresting exiles; and the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, who disapproved of the treachery of Bayonne, was made to appear the Emperor's accomplice.

Such were the means whereby Napoleon gained the crowns of Spain and the Indies, without striking a blow. His excuse for the treachery as expressed at the time was as follows: "My action is not good from a certain point of view, I know. But my policy demands that I shall not leave in my rear, so near to Paris, a dynasty hostile to mine." From this and from other similar remarks, it would seem that his resolve to dethrone the Bourbons was taken while on his march to Jena, but was thrust down into the abyss of his inscrutable will for a whole year, until Junot's march to Lisbon furnished a safe means for effecting the subjugation of Spain. This end he thenceforth pursued unswervingly with no sign of remorse, or even of hesitation — unless we accept as genuine the almost certainly spurious letter of March 29th, 1808. That letter represents him as blaming Murat for entering Madrid, when he had repeatedly urged him to do so; as asking his advice after he had all along kept him in ignorance as to his aims; and as writing a philosophical homily on the unused energies of the Spanish people, for whom in his genuine letters he expressed a lofty contempt.[1]

The whole enterprise is, indeed, a masterpiece of skill, but a masterpiece marred by ineffaceable stains of treachery. And at the close of his life, he himself said: "I embarked very badly on the Spanish affair, I confess: the immorality of it was too patent, the injustice too cynical, and the whole thing wears an ugly look since I have fallen; for the attempt is only seen in its hideous naked-

[1] "Corresp.," No. 13696. A careful comparison of this laboured, halting effusion, with the curt military style of the genuine letters — and especially with Nos. 93, 94, and 100 of the "New Letters" — must demonstrate its non-authenticity. Thiers' augument to the contrary effect is rambling and weak. Count Murat in his recent monograph on his father pronounces the letter a fabrication of St. Helena or later. It was first published in the "Mémorial de St. Hélène," an untrustworthy compilation made by Las Cases after Napoleon's death from notes taken at St. Helena.

ness deprived of all majesty and of the many benefits which completed my intention."

That he hoped to reform Spain is certain. Political and social reforms had hitherto consolidated the work of conquest; and those which he soon offered to the Spaniards might possibly have renovated that nation, had they not been handed in at the sword's point; but the motive was too obvious, the intervention too insulting, to render success possible with the most sensitive people in Europe. On May 2nd he wrote to Murat that he intended King Joseph of Naples to reign at Madrid, and offered to Murat either Portugal or Naples.[1] He chose the latter. Joseph was allowed no choice in the matter. He was summoned from Naples to Bayonne, and, on arriving at Pau, heard with great surprise that he was King of Spain.

Napoleon's selection was tactful. At Naples, the eldest of the Bonapartes had effected many reforms and was generally popular; but the treachery of Bayonne blasted all hopes of his succeeding at Madrid. Though the grandees of Spain welcomed the new monarch with courtly grace, though Charles IV., gave him his blessing, though Ferdinand demeaned himself by advising his former subjects quietly to submit, the populace willed otherwise.

Every instinct of the Spanish nature was aflame with resentment. Loathing for Charles IV., his Queen, and their favourite, whom Napoleon richly dowered, love of the young King whom he falsely filched away, detestation of the French troops who outraged the rights of hospitality, and zeal for the Roman Catholic Church, whose chief had just been robbed of half his States, goaded the Spaniards to madness. Their indignation rumbled hoarsely for a time, like a volcano in labour, and then burst forth in an explosion of fury. The constitution which Napoleon presented to the Spanish Notables

[1] Napoleon had at first intended the Spanish crown for Louis, to whom he wrote on March 27th: "The climate of Holland does not suit you. Besides, Holland can never rise from her ruins." Louis declined, on the ground that his call to Holland had been from heaven, and not from Napoleon!

JOACHIM MURAT,

KING OF NAPLES, 1808.

EUGÈNE BEAUHARNAIS, VICEROY OF ITALY, AND HIS CONSORT, AMELIA OF BAVARIA, 1806.

CAROLINE BONAPARTE,

QUEEN OF NAPLES, 1808.

THE KING AND QUEEN OF NAPLES
(from Edwards' "Napoleon Medals")

AND EUGÈNE AND AMELIA BEAUHARNAIS
(from Delaroche's "Trésor de Numismatique").

at Bayonne was accepted by them, only to be flung back with scorn by the people. The men of enlightenment who counselled prudence and patience were slain by raging mobs or sought safety in flight. The rising was at once national in its grand spontaneity and local in its intensity. Province after province rose in arms, except the north and centre, where 80,000 French troops held the patriots in check. In the van of the movement was the rugged little province of Asturias, long ago the forlorn hope of the Christians in their desperate conflicts with the Moors. Intrenched behind their mountains and proud of their ancient fame, the Asturians ventured on the sublime folly of declaring war against the ruler of the West and the lord of 900,000 warriors. Swiftly Galicia and Leon in the north repeated the challenge; while in the south, the fertile lands of Andalusia, Murcia, and Valencia flashed back from their mountains the beacon lights of a national war. The former dislike of England was forgotten. The Juntas of Asturias, Galicia, and Andalusia sent appeals to us for help, to which Canning generously responded; and, on July 4th, we passed at a single bound from war with the Spanish Bourbons to an informal alliance with the people of Spain.

Napoleon now began to see the magnitude of his error. Instead of gaining control over Spain and the Indies, he had changed long-suffering allies into irreconcilable foes. He prepared to conquer Spain. While Joseph was escorted to his new capital by a small army, Napoleon from Bayonne directed the operations of his generals. Holding the northern road from Bayonne to Burgos and Madrid, they were to send out cautious feelers against the bands of insurgents; for, as Napoleon wrote to Savary (July 13th): "In civil wars it is the important posts that must be held: one ought not to go everywhere." Weighty words, which his lieutenants in Spain were often to disregard! Bessières in the north gained a success at Medina de Rio Seco; but a signal disaster in the south ruined the whole campaign. Dupont, after beating the levies of Andalusia, penetrated into the heart of that great province, and, when cumbered with plunder, his divided forces were surrounded, cut off from their supplies, and forced to surren-

der at Baylen — in all about 20,000 men (July 19th). The news that a French army had laid down its arms caused an immense sensation in an age when Napoleon's troops were held to be invincible. Baylen was hailed everywhere by despairing patriots as the dawn of a new era. And such it was to be. If Valmy proclaimed the advent of militant democracy, the victory of Spaniards over one of the bravest of Napoleon's generals was felt to be an even greater portent. It ushered in the epoch of national resistance to the overweening claims of the Emperor of the West.

That truth he seems dimly to have surmised. His rage on hearing of the capitulation was at first too deep for words. Then he burst out: "Could I have expected that from Dupont, a man whom I loved, and was rearing up to become a Marshal? They say he had no other way to save the lives of his soldiers. Better, far better, to have died with arms in their hands. Their death would have been glorious: we should have avenged them. You can always supply the place of soldiers. Honour alone, when once lost, can never be regained."

Moreover, the material consequences were considerable. The Spaniards speedily threatened Madrid; and, on the advice of Savary, Joseph withdrew from his capital after a week's sojourn, and fell back hurriedly on the line of the Upper Ebro, where the French rallied for a second advance.

Their misfortunes did not end here. In the northeast the hardy Catalans had risen against the invaders, and by sheer pluck and audacity cooped them up in their ill-gotten strongholds of Barcelona and Figueras. The men of Arragon, too, never backward in upholding their ancient liberties, rallied to defend their capital Saragossa. Their rage was increased by the arrival of Palafox, who had escaped in disguise from the suite of Ferdinand at Bayonne, and brought news of the treachery there perpetrated. Beaten outside their ancient city, and unable to hold its crumbling walls against the French cannon and columns of assault, the defenders yet fiercely turned to bay amidst its narrow lanes and massive monasteries. There a novel warfare was waged. From street to street and house to house the fight eddied for days, the Arragonese opposing to French valour the stubborn devotion ever shown by the

WELLINGTON.

From a mezzotint by S. Cousens after Sir Thomas Lawrence.

peoples of the peninsula in defence of their walled cities, and an enthusiasm kindled by the zeal of their monks and the heroism of the Maid of Saragossa. Finally, on August 10th the noble city shook off the grip of the 15,000 assailants, who fell back to join Joseph's forces higher up the Ebro.

Even now the Emperor did not fully realize the serious nature of the war that was beginning. Despite Savary's warnings of the dangers to be faced in Spain, he persisted in thinking of it as an ordinary war that could be ended by good strategy and a few victories. He censured Joseph and Savary for giving up the line of the upper Douro: he blamed them next for the evacuation of Tudela, and summed up the situation by stating that "all the Spanish forces are not able to overthrow 25,000 French in a reasonable position" — adding, with stinging satire: "In war *men* are nothing: it is *a man* who is everything."

When, at the close of August, Napoleon penned these memorable words in his palace of St. Cloud, he knew not that a *man* had arrived on the scene of action. At the beginning of that month, Sir Arthur Wellesley with a British force of 12,300 men landed at the mouth of the River Mondego, and, aided by Portuguese irregulars, began his march on Lisbon. This is not the place for a review of the character and career of our great warrior: in truth, a volume would be too short for the task. With fine poetic insight, Lord Tennyson has noted in his funeral Ode the qualities that enabled him to overcome the unexampled difficulties caused by our own incompetent Government and by jealous, exacting, and slipshod allies:

> "Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
> The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
> Whole in himself, a common good."

Glory and vexation were soon to be his. On the 17th he drove the French vanguard from Roliça; and when, four days later, Junot hurried up with all his force, the British inflicted on that presumptuous leader a signal defeat at Vimiero. So bad were Junot's tactics that his whole force would have been cut off from Torres Vedras, had not Wellesley's senior officer, Sir Harry Burrard, arrived just in time

to take over the command and stop the pursuit. Thereupon Wellesley sarcastically exclaimed to his staff: "Gentlemen, nothing now remains to us but to go and shoot red-legged partridges." The peculiarities of our war administration were further seen in the supersession of Burrard by Sir Hew Dalrymple, whose chief title to fame is his signing of the Convention of Cintra.

By this strange compact the whole of Junot's force was to be conveyed from Portugal to France on British ships, while the Russian squadron blockaded in the Tagus was to be held by us in pledge till the peace, the crews being sent on to Russia. The convention itself was violently attacked by the English public; but it has found a defender in Napier, who dwells on the advantages of getting the French at once out of Portugal, and thus providing a sure base for the operations in Spain. Seeing, however, that Junot's men were demoralized by defeat, and that the nearest succouring force was in Navarre, these excuses seem scarcely tenable, except on the ground that, with such commanders as Burrard and Dalrymple, it was certainly desirable to get the French speedily away.

On his side, Napoleon showed much annoyance at Junot's acceptance of this convention, and remarked: "I was about to send Junot to a council of war: but happily the English got the start of me by sending their generals to one, and thus saved me from the pain of punishing an old friend." With his customary severity to those who had failed, he frowned on all the officers of the Army of Portugal, and, on landing in France, they were strictly forbidden to come to Paris. The fate of Dupont and of all his officers who were not cooped up in Spanish galleys, was even harder: on their return they were condemned to imprisonment. By such means did Napoleon exact the uttermost from his troops, even in a service so detested as that in Spain ever was.[1]

Despite the blunderings of our War Office, the silly vapourings of the Spaniards, and the insane quarrels of their provincial juntas about precedence and the sharing of English subsidies, the summer of 1808 saw Napoleon's power stagger under terrible blows. Not only did he lose

[1] Memoirs of Thiébault and De Broglie; so, too, De Rocca, "La Guerre en Espagne."

Spain and Portugal and the subsidies which they had meekly paid, but most of the fifteen thousand Spanish troops which had served him on the shores of the Baltic found means to slip away on British ships and put a backbone into the patriotic movements in the north of Spain. But worst of all was the loss of that moral strength, which he himself reckoned as three-fourths of the whole force in war. Hitherto he had always been able to marshal the popular impulse on his side. As the heir to the Revolution he had appealed, and not in vain, to the democratic forces which he had hypnotized in France but sought to stir up in his favour abroad. Despite the efforts of Czartoryski and Stein to tear the democratic mask from his face, it imposed on mankind until the Spanish Revolution laid bare the truth; and at St. Helena the exile gave his own verdict on the policy of Bayonne: "It was the Spanish ulcer which ruined me."

CHAPTER XXIX

ERFURT

"At bottom the great question is — who shall have Constantinople?" — NAPOLEON, May 31st, 1808.

THE Spanish Rising made an immense rent in Napoleon's plans. It opened valuable markets for British goods both in the Peninsula and in South and Central America, and that too at the very time when the Continental System was about to enfold us in its deadly grip.[1] And finally it disarranged schemes that reached far beyond Europe. To these we must now briefly recur.

Even amidst his greatest military triumphs Napoleon's gaze turned longingly towards the East; and no sooner did he force peace on the conquered than his thoughts centred once more on his navy and colonies, on Egypt and India. The Treaty of Tilsit gave him leisure to renew these designs. The publication in 1807 of his official Atlas of Australia, in which he claimed nearly half that continent for France, proves that he never accepted Trafalgar as a death-blow to his maritime and colonial aspirations. And the ardour of his desire for the conquest of India is seen in the letter which he wrote to the Czar on February 2nd, 1808. After expressing his desire for the glory and expansion of Russia, and advising the Czar to conquer Finland, he proceeds:

"An army of 50,000 men, Russians, French, and perhaps a few Austrians, that penetrated by way of Constantinople into Asia, would not reach the Euphrates before England would tremble and bow the knee before the Continent. I am ready in Dalmatia. Your Majesty is ready on the Danube. A month after we came to an agreement the

[1] See the letter of an Englishman from Buenos Ayres of September 27th, 1809, in "Cobbett's Register" for 1810 (p. 256), stating that the new popular Government there was driven by want of funds, "not from their good wishes to England," to open their ports to all foreign commerce on moderate duties.

army could be on the Bosporus. . . . By the 1st of May our troops can be in Asia, and at the same time those of Your Majesty, at Stockholm. Then the English, threatened in the Indies, and chased from the Levant, will be crushed under the weight of events with which the atmosphere will be charged."[1]

There were several reasons why Napoleon should urge on this scheme. He was irritated by the continued resistance of Great Britain, and thought to terrify us into surrender by means of those oriental enterprises which convinced our statesmen that we must fight on for dear life. He also desired to restore the harmony of his relations with Alexander. For, in truth, the rapturous harmonies of Tilsit had soon been marred by discord. Alexander did not withdraw his troops from the Danubian provinces; whereupon Napoleon declined to evacuate Silesia; and the friction resulting from this wary balancing of interests was increased, when, at the close of 1807, a formal proposal was sent from Paris that, if Russia retained those provinces, Silesia should be at the disposal of France.[2] The dazzling vistas opened up to Alexander's gaze at Tilsit were thus shrouded by a sordid and distasteful bargain, which he hotly repelled. To repair this false step, Napoleon now wrote the alluring letter quoted above; and the Czar exclaimed on perusing it: "Ah, this is the language of Tilsit."

Yet, it may be questioned whether Napoleon desired to press on an immediate partition of the Ottoman Power. His letter invited the Czar to two great enterprises, the conquest of Finland and the invasion of Persia and India. The former by itself was destined to tax Russia's strength. Despite Alexander's offer of a perpetual guarantee for the Finnish constitution and customs, that interesting people opposed a stubborn resistance. Napoleon must also have known that Russia's forces were then wholly unequal to the invasion of India; and his invitation to Alexander to engage in two serious enterprises certainly had the effect of postponing the partition of Turkey. Delay was all in his favour, if he was to gain the lion's share of the spoils.

[1] Vandal, "Napoléon et Alexandre," ch. vii. It is not published in the "Correspondence" or in the "New Letters."

[2] Vandal, "Napoléon et Alexandre," vol. i., ch. iv., and App. II.

Russian troops were ready on the banks of the Danube; but he was not as yet fully prepared. His hold on Dalmatia, Ragusa, and Corfu was not wholly assured. Sicily and Malta still defied him; and not until he seized Sicily could he gain the control of the Mediterranean — "the constant aim of my policy." Only when that great sea had become a French lake could he hope to plant himself firmly in Albania, Thessaly, Greece, Crete, Egypt, and Syria.

For the present, then, the Czar was beguiled with the prospect of an eastern expedition; and, while Russian troops were overrunning Finland, Napoleon sought to conquer Sicily and reduce Spain to the rank of a feudatory State. From this wider point of view, he looked on the Iberian Peninsula merely as a serviceable base for a greater enterprise, the conquest of the East. This is proved by a letter that he wrote to Decrès, Minister of Marine and of the Colonies, from Bayonne on May 17th, 1808, when the Spanish affair seemed settled: "There is not much news from India. England is in great penury there, and the arrival of an expedition [from France] would ruin that colony from top to bottom. The more I reflect on this step, the less inconvenience I see in taking it." Two days later he wrote to Murat that money must be found for naval preparations at the Spanish ports: "I must have ships, for I intend striking a heavy blow towards the end of the season." But at the close of June he warned Decrès that as Spanish affairs were going badly, he must postpone his design of despatching a fleet far from European waters.[1]

Spain having proved to be, not a meek purveyor of fleets, but a devourer of French armies, there was the more need of a close accord with the Czar. Napoleon desired, not only to assure a further postponement of the Turkish enterprise, but also to hold Austria and Germany in check.

[1] In the conversations which Metternich had with Napoleon and Talleyrand on and after January 22nd, 1808, he was convinced that the French Emperor intended to partition Turkey as soon as it suited him to do so, which would be after he had subjected Spain. Napoleon said to him: "When the Russians are at Constantinople you will need France to help you against them." — "Metternich Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 188.

The former Power, seeing Napoleon in difficulties, pushed on apace her military organization; and Germany heaved with suppressed excitement at the news of the Spanish Rising. The dormant instinct of German nationality had already shown signs of awakening. In the early days of 1808 the once cosmopolitan philosopher, Fichte, delivered at Berlin within sound of the French drums his "Addresses to the German Nation," in which he dwelt on the unquenchable strength of a people that determined at all costs to live free.

On the philosopher's theme the Spaniards now furnished a commentary written with their life-blood. Thinkers and soldiers were alike moved by the stories of Baylen and Saragossa. Varnhagen von Ense relates how deep was the excitement of the quaint sage, Jean Paul Richter, who "doubted not that the Germans would one day rise against the French as the Spaniards had done, and that Prussia would revenge its insults and give freedom to Germany. . . . I proved to him how hollow and weak was Napoleon's power: how deeply rooted was the opposition to it. The Spaniards were the refrain to everything, and we always returned to them."

The beginnings of a new civic life were then being laid in Prussia by Stein. Called by the King to be virtually a civic dictator, this great statesman carried out the most drastic reforms. In October, 1807, there appeared at Memel the decrees of emancipation which declared the abolition of serfdom with all its compulsory and menial services. The old feudal society was further invigorated by the admission of all classes to the holding of land or to any employment, while trade monopolies were similarly swept away. Municipal self-government gave new zest and energy to civic life; and the principle that the army "ought to be the union of all the moral and physical energies of the nation" was carried out by the military organizer Scharnhorst, who conceived and partly realized the idea that all able-bodied men should serve their time with the colours and then be drafted into a reserve. This military reform excited Napoleon's distrust, and he forced the King to agree by treaty (September, 1808) that the Prussian army should never exceed 42,000 men, a measure

which did not hinder the formation of an effective reserve, and was therefore complied with to the letter, if not in spirit.

In fact, in the previous month a plan of a popular insurrection had been secretly discussed by Stein, Scharnhorst, and other patriotic Ministers. The example of the Spaniards was everywhere to be followed, and, if Austria sent forth her legions on the Danube and England helped in Hanover, there seemed some prospect of shaking off the Napoleonic yoke. The scheme miscarried, and largely owing to the interception of a letter in which Stein imprudently referred to the exasperation of public feeling in Germany and the lively hope excited by the events in Spain and the preparations of Austria. Napoleon caused the letter to be printed in the "Moniteur" of September 8th, and sequestered Stein's property in Westphalia. He also kept his grip on Prussia; for while withdrawing most of his troops from that exhausted land, he retained French garrisons in Stettin, Glogau, and Küstrin. Holding these fortresses on the strong defensive line of the Oder, he might smile at the puny efforts of Prussian patriots and hope speedily to crush the Spanish rebels, provided he could count on the loyal support of Alexander in holding Austria in check.

To gain this support and to clear away the clouds that bulked on their oriental horizon, Napoleon urgently desired an interview with his ally. For some months it had been proposed; but the Spanish Rising and the armaments of Austria made it essential.

The meeting took place at Erfurt (September 27th). The Thuringian city was ablaze with uniforms, and the cannon thundered salvoes of welcome as the two potentates and their suites entered the ancient walls and filed through narrow streets redolent of old German calm, an abode more suited to the speculations of a Luther than to the world-embracing schemes of the Emperors of the West and East. With them were their chief warriors and Ministers, personages who now threw into the shade the new German kings. There, too, were the lesser German princes, some of them to grace the Court of the man who had showered lands and titles on them, others to hint a

wish for more lands and higher titles. In truth, the title of king was tantalizingly common; and if we may credit a story of the time, the French soldiery had learnt to despise it. For, on one occasion, when the guard of honour, deceived by the splendour of the King of Würtemberg's chariot, was about to deliver the triple salute accorded only to the two Emperors, the officer in command angrily exclaimed: "Be quiet: it's only a king."

The Emperors at Erfurt devoted the mornings to personal interviews, the afternoons to politics, the evenings to receptions and the theatre. The actors of the Comédie Française had been brought from Paris, and played to the Emperors and a parterre of princes the masterpieces of the French stage, especially those which contained suitable allusions. A notable incident occurred on the recital of the line in the "Œdipe" of Voltaire:

"L'amitié d'un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux."

As if moved by a sudden inspiration, Alexander arose and warmly pressed the hand of Napoleon, who was then half-dozing at his side.[1] On the surface, indeed, everything was friendship and harmony. With urbane facility, the Czar accompanied his ally to the battlefield of Jena, listened to the animated description of the victor, and then joined in the chase in a forest hard by.

But beneath these brilliant shows there lurked suspicions and fears. Alexander was annoyed that Napoleon retained French garrisons in the fortresses on the Oder and claimed an impossible sum as indemnity from Prussia. This was not the restoration of Prussia's independence, for which he, Alexander, had pleaded; and while the French eagles were at Küstrin, the Russian frontier could not be deemed wholly safe.[2] Then again the Czar had been secretly warned by Talleyrand against complaisance to the French Emperor. "Sire, what are you coming here for? It is for you to save Europe, and you will only succeed in that by resisting Napoleon. The French are civilized, their sovereign is not. The sovereign of Russia is civilized, her people are not. Therefore the sovereign of Russia must

[1] So Soult told Lord Holland ("Foreign Reminiscences," p. 171).
[2] Vandal, vol. i., p. 384.

be the ally of the French people."[1] We may doubt whether this symmetrical proposition would have had much effect, if Alexander had not received similar warnings from his own ambassador at Paris; and it would seem that too much importance has been assigned to what is termed Talleyrand's *treachery* at Erfurt.[2] Affairs of high policy are determined, not so much by the logic of words as by the sterner logic of facts. Ever since Tilsit, Napoleon had been prodigal of promises to his ally, but of little else. The alluring visions set forth in his letter of February 2nd were as visionary as ever; and Romantzoff expressed the wish of his countrymen in his remark to Champagny: "We have come to Erfurt to set a limit to this conduct." It was evident that if Napoleon had his way completely, the partition of Turkey would take place at the time and in the manner desired by him; this the Czar was determined to prevent, and therefore turned a deaf ear to his ally's proposal that they should summon Austria to explain her present ambiguous behaviour and frankly to recognize Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain. If Austria put a stop to her present armaments, the supremacy of Napoleon in Central Europe would be alarmingly great. Clearly it was not to Russia's interest to weaken the only buffer-state that remained between her and the Empire of the West.

These fears were quietly fed by a special envoy of the Court of Vienna, Baron Vincent, who brought complimentary notes to the two Emperors and remained to feel the pulse of European policy. It boded peace for Austria for the present. Despite Napoleon's eager arguments that England would never make peace until Austria accepted the present situation in Spain, Alexander quietly but firmly refused to take any steps to depress the Hapsburg Power. The discussions waxed warm; for Napoleon saw that, unless the Court of Vienna were coerced, England would persist in aiding the Spanish patriots; and Alexander showed an unexpected obstinacy. Napoleon's plea,

[1] Metternich, "Mems.," vol. ii., p. 298 (Eng. edit.).

[2] I think that Beer (pp. 330–340) errs somewhat in ranking Talleyrand's work at Erfurt at that statesman's own very high valuation, which he enhanced in later years: see Greville's "Mems.," Second Part, vol. ii., p. 193.

that peace could only be assured by the entire discouragement of England, Austria, and the Spanish "rebels," had no effect on him: in fact, he began to question the sincerity of a peacemaker whose methods were war and intimidation. Finding arguments useless, Napoleon had recourse to anger. At the end of a lively discussion, he threw his cap on the ground and stamped on it. Alexander stopped, looked at him with a meaning smile, and said quietly: "You are violent: as for me, I am obstinate: anger gains nothing from me: let us talk, let us reason, or I go." He moved towards the door, whereupon Napoleon called him back — and they reasoned.

It was of no avail. Though Alexander left his ally a free hand in Spain, he refused to join him in a diplomatic menace to Austria; and Napoleon saw that "those devilish Spanish affairs" were at the root of this important failure, which was to cost him the war on the Danube in the following year.

As a set-off to this check, he disappointed Alexander respecting Prussia and Turkey. He refused to withdraw his troops from the fortresses on the Oder, and grudgingly consented to lower his pecuniary claims on Prussia from 140,000,000 francs to 120,000,000. Towards the Czar's Turkish schemes he showed little more complaisance. After sharp discussions it was finally settled that Russia should gain the Danubian provinces, but not until the following year. France renounced all mediation between Alexander and the Porte, but required him to maintain the integrity of all the other Turkish possessions, which meant that the partition of Turkey was to be postponed until it suited Napoleon to take up his oriental schemes in earnest. The golden visions of Tilsit were thus once more relegated to a distant future, and the keenness of the Czar's disappointment may be measured by his striking statement quoted by Caulaincourt in one of his earlier reports from St. Petersburg: "Let the world be turned upside down provided that Russia gains Constantinople and the Dardanelles." [1]

The Erfurt interview left another hidden sore. It was there that the divorce from Josephine was officially dis-

[1] Vandal, vol. i., p. 307.

cussed, with a view to a more ambitious alliance. Persistent as the rumours of a divorce had been for seven years past, they seem to have emanated, not from the husband, but from jealous sisters-in-law, intriguing relatives, and officious Ministers. To the most meddlesome of these satellites, Fouché, who had ventured to suggest to Josephine the propriety of sacrificing herself for the good of the State, Napoleon had lately administered a severe rebuke. But now he caused Talleyrand and Caulaincourt to sound the Czar as to the feasibility of an alliance with one of his sisters. The response was equally vague and discreet. Alexander expressed his gratification at the friendship which proffered such a request and his desire for the founding of a Napoleonic House. Further than this he did not go: and eight days after his return to St. Petersburg his only marriageable sister, Catherine, was affianced to the heir to the Duchy of Oldenburg. This event, it is true, was decided by the Dowager Empress; but no one, least of all Napoleon, could harbour any doubts as to its significance.

In truth, Napoleon's chief triumphs at Erfurt were social and literary. His efforts to dazzle German princes and denationalize two of her leading thinkers were partly successful. Goethe and Wieland bowed before his greatness. To the former Napoleon granted a lengthy interview. He flattered the aged poet at the outset by the words, "You are a man": he then talked about several works in a way that Goethe thought very just; and he criticised one passage of the poet's youthful work, "Werther," as untrue to nature, with which Goethe agreed. On Voltaire's "Mahomet" he heaped censure, for its unworthy portraiture of the conqueror of the East and its ineffective fatalism. "These pieces belong to an obscure age. Besides, what do they mean with their fatalism? Politics is fatalism." The significance of this saying was soon to be emphasized, so that misapprehension was impossible. After witnessing Voltaire's "La Mort de César," Napoleon suggested that the poet ought to write a tragedy in a grander style than Voltaire's, so as to show how the world would have benefited if the great Roman had had time to carry out his vast plans.

Finally, Goethe was invited to come to Paris, where he would find abundant materials for his poetic creations. Fortunately, Goethe was able to plead his age in excuse; and the world was therefore spared the sight of a great genius saddled with an imperial commission and writing a Napoleonized version of Cæsar's exploits and policy. But the pressing character of the invitation reveals the Emperor's dissatisfaction with his French poetasters and his intention to denationalize German literature. He had a dim perception that Teutonic idealism was a dangerous foe, inasmuch as it kept alive the sense of nationality which he was determined to obliterate. He was right. The last and most patriotic of Schiller's works, "Wilhelm Tell," the impassioned discourses of Fichte, the efforts of the new patriotic league, the Tugendbund, and last, but not least, the memory of the murdered Palm, all these were influences that baffled bayonets and diplomacy. Conquer and bargain as he might, he could not grapple with the impalpable forces of the era that was now dawning. The younger generation throbbed responsive to the teachings of Fichte, the appeals of Stein, and the exploits of the Spaniards; it was blind to the splendours of Erfurt: and it heard with grief, but with no change of conviction, that Goethe and Wieland had accepted from Napoleon the cross of the Legion of Honour, and that too on the anniversary of the Battle of Jena.

After thus finally belittling the two poets, he shot a parting shaft at German idealism in his farewell to the academicians. He bade them beware of idealogues as dangerous dreamers and disguised materialists. Then, raising his voice, he exclaimed: "Philosophers plague themselves with weaving systems: they will never find a better one than Christianity, which, reconciling man with himself, also assures public order and repose. Your idealogues destroy every illusion; and the time of illusions is for peoples and individuals alike the time of happiness. I carry one away, that you will think kindly of me." He then mounted his carriage and drove away to Paris to resume his conquest of Spain.[1]

[1] Sklower, "L'Entrevue de Napoléon avec Goethe"; Mrs. Austin's "Germany from 1760 to 1814"; Oncken, bk. vii., ch. i. For Napoleon's

The last diplomatic proceeding at Erfurt was the drawing up of a secret convention which assigned Finland and the Danubian Provinces to Russia, and promised Russia's help to Napoleon in case Austria should attack him. The Czar also recognized Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain and joined Napoleon in a joint note to George III. summoning him to make peace. On the same day (October 12th) that note was drawn up and despatched to London. In reply, Canning stated our willingness to treat for peace, provided that it should include all parties: that, although bound by no formal treaty to Ferdinand VII. and the Spanish people, yet we felt ourselves none the less pledged to them, and presumed that they, as well as our other allies, would be admitted to the negotiations. Long before this reply reached Paris, Napoleon had left for Spain. But on November 19th, he charged Champagny to state that the Spanish rebels could no more be admitted than the Irish insurgents: as for the other parties to the dispute he would not refuse to admit "either the King reigning in Sweden, or the King reigning in Sicily, or the King reigning in Brazil." This insulting reply sufficiently shows the insincerity of his overtures and the peculiarity of his views of monarchy. The Spaniards were rebels because they refused to recognize the forced abdication of their young King; and the rulers of Sweden, Naples, and Portugal were Kings as long as it suited Napoleon to tolerate them, and no longer. It is needless to add that our Government refused to desert the Spaniards; and in his reply to St. Petersburg, Canning expressed George III.'s deep regret that Alexander should sanction

"An usurpation unparalleled in the history of the world. . . . If these be the principles to which the Emperor of Russia has inviolably attached himself . . . deeply does His Majesty [George III.] lament a determination by which the sufferings of Europe must be aggravated and prolonged. But not to His Majesty is to be attributed the continuance of the calamities of war, by the disappointment of all hope of such a peace as would be compatible with justice and honour."[1]

dispute with Wieland about Tacitus see Talleyrand, "Mems.," vol., i., pt. 5. When the Emperors' carriages were ready for departure, Talleyrand whispered to Alexander: "Ah! si Votre Majesté pouvait se tromper de voiture."

[1] "F. O.," Russia, No. 74, despatch of December 9th, 1808. On January 14th, 1809, Canning signed a treaty of alliance with the Spanish people,

No open-minded person can peruse the correspondence on this subject without concluding that British policy, if lacking the breadth, grip, and *finesse* that marked that of France and Russia, yet possessed the sterling merits of manly truthfulness and staunch fidelity. The words quoted above were the words of Canning, but the spirit that animated them was that of George III. His storm-tossed life was now verging towards the dread bourne of insanity; but it was given to him to make this stern yet half-pleading appeal to the Czar's better nature. And who shall say that the example of constancy which the aged King displayed amidst the gathering gloom of his public and private life did not ultimately bear fruit in the later and grander phase of Alexander's character and career?

Meanwhile Napoleon was bursting through the Spanish defence. The patriots, puffed up with their first successes, had been indulging in dreams of an invasion of France; and their provincial juntas quarrelled over the sharing of the future spoils as over the apportionment of English arms and money. Their awakening was terrible. With less than 90,000 raw troops they were attacked by 150,000 men led by the greatest warrior of the age. Everywhere they were routed, and at a last fight at the pass over the Somosierra mountain, the superiority of the French was strikingly shown. While the Spaniards were pouring down grapeshot on the struggling masses of the assailants, the Emperor resolved to hurl his light Polish horse uphill at the death-dealing guns. Dashingly was the order obeyed. Some forty or fifty riders bit the dust, but the rest swept on, sabred the gunners, and decided the day. The Spaniards, amazed at these unheard-of tactics, took to their heels, and nothing now stayed Napoleon's entry into Madrid (December 4th). There he strove to popularize Joseph's rule by offering several desirable reforms, such as the abolition of feudal laws and of the Inquisition. It was of no avail. The Spaniards would have none of them at his hands.

After a brief stay in Madrid, he turned to crush Sir

both sides agreeing never to make peace with Napoleon except by common consent. It was signed when the Spanish cause seemed desperate; but it was religiously observed.

John Moore. That brave soldier, relying on the empty promises of the patriots, had ventured into the heart of Leon with a British force of 26,000 men. If he could not save Madrid, he could at least postpone a French conquest of the south. In this he succeeded; his chivalrous daring drew on him the chief strength of the invaders; and when hopelessly outnumbered he beat a lion-like retreat to Corunna. There he turned and dealt the French a blow that closed his own career with glory and gained time for his men to embark in safety.

While the red-coats saw the snowy heights of Galicia fade into the sky, Napoleon was spurring back to the Pyrenees. He had received news that portended war with Austria; and, cherishing the strange belief that Spain was conquered, he rushed back to Paris to confront the Hapsburg Power. But Spain was not conquered. Scattered her armies were in the open, and even brave Saragossa fell in glorious ruins under Lannes' persistent attacks. But the patriots fiercely rallied in the mountains, and Napoleon was to find out the truth of the Roman historian's saying: "In no land does the character of the people and the nature of the country help to repair disasters more readily than in Spain."

There was another reason for Napoleon's sudden return. Rumours had reached him as to the *rapprochement* of those usually envious rivals, Talleyrand and Fouché, who now walked arm in arm, held secret conclaves, and seemed to have some understanding with Murat. Were they plotting to bring this ambitious man and his still more ambitious and vindictive consort from the despised throne at Naples to seize on power at Paris while the Emperor was engulfed in the Spanish quagmire? A story ran that Fouché had relays of horses ready between Naples and Paris for this enterprise.[1] But where Fouché and Talleyrand are concerned, truth lurks at the bottom of an unfathomable well.

All we know for certain is that Napoleon flew back to Paris in a towering rage, and that, after sharply rebuking Fouché, he subjected the Prince of Benevento to a violent tirade: just as he (Talleyrand) had first advised the death

[1] Madelin's "Fouché," vol. ii., p. 80; Pasquier, vol. i., pp. 353-360.

of the Duc d'Enghien and then turned that event to his sovereign's discredit, so now, after counselling the overthrow of the Spanish dynasty, he was making the same underhand use of the miscarriage of that enterprise. The Grand Chamberlain stood as if unmoved until the storm swept by, and then coldly remarked to the astonished circle: "What a pity that so great a man has been so badly brought up." Nevertheless, the insult rankled deep in his being, there to be nursed for five years, and then in the fulness of time to dart forth with a snake-like revenge. In 1814 and 1815 men saw that not the least serious result of Napoleon's Spanish policy was the envenoming of his relations with the two cleverest of living Frenchmen.

CHAPTER XXX

NAPOLEON AND AUSTRIA

"NEVER maltreat an enemy by halves": such was the sage advice of Prussia's warrior King Frederick the Great, who instinctively saw the folly of half measures in dealing with a formidable foe. The only statesmanlike alternatives were, to win his friendship by generous treatment, or to crush him to the earth so that be could not rise to deal another blow.

As we have seen, Napoleon deliberately took the perilous middle course with the Hapsburgs after Austerlitz. He tore away from them their faithful Tyrolese along with all their Swabian lands, and he half crippled them in Italy by leaving them the line of the Adige instead of the Mincio. Later on, he compelled Austria to join the Continental System, to the detriment of her commerce and revenue; and his thinly veiled threats at Erfurt nerved her to strike home as soon as she saw him embarked on the Spanish enterprise. She had some grounds for confidence. The blows showered on the Hapsburg States had served to weld them more closely together; reforms effected in the administration under the guidance of the able and high-spirited minister, Stadion, promised to reinvigorate the whole Empire; and army reforms, championed by the Archduke Charles, had shelved the petted incapables of the Court and opened up undreamt-of vistas of hope even to the common soldier. Moreover, it was certain that the Tyrolese would revolt against the cast-iron Liberalism now imposed on them from Munich, which interfered with their cherished customs and church festivals.

Throughout Germany, too, there were widespread movements for casting off the yoke of Napoleon. The benefits gained by the adoption of his laws were already balanced by the deepening hardships entailed by the Continental

System; and the national German sentiment, which Napoleon ever sought to root out, persistently clung to Berlin and Vienna. A new thrill of resentment ran through Germany when Napoleon launched a decree of proscription against Stein, who had resigned office on November 24th. It was dated from Madrid (December 16th, 1808), and ordered that "the man named Stein," for seeking to excite troubles in Germany, should be held an enemy of France and the Confederation of the Rhine, and suffer confiscation of his property and seizure of his person, wherever he might be. The great statesman thereupon fled into Austria, where all the hopes of German nationalists now centred.[1]

On April the 6th the Archduke Charles issued a proclamation in which the new hopes of reformed Austria found eloquent expression: "The freedom of Europe has sought refuge beneath your banners. Soldiers, your victories will break her chains: your German brothers who are now in the ranks of the enemy wait for their deliverance." These hopes were premature. Austria was too late or too soon: she was too late to overpower the Bavarians, or to catch the French forces leaderless, and too soon to gain the full benefit from her recent army reforms and from the diversion promised by England on the North Sea.[2] But our limits of space render it impossible adequately to describe the course of the struggle on the Danube or of the Tyrolese rising.

Napoleon, hurrying from Paris, found his forces spread out over a front of sixty miles from Ratisbon to positions south of Augsburg, and it needed all his skill to mass them before the Archduke's blows fell. Thanks to Austrian slowness the danger was averted, and a difficult retrograde movement was speedily changed into a triumphant offensive. Five successive days saw as many French

[1] Seeley, "Life and Times of Stein," vol. ii., p. 316; Häusser, vol. iii., p. 219 (4th edition).

[2] Our F. O. Records show that we wanted to help Austria; but a long delay was caused by George III.'s insisting that she should make peace with us first. Canning meanwhile sent £250,000 in silver bars to Trieste. But in his note of April 20th he assured the Court of Vienna that our treasury had been "nearly exhausted" by the drain of the Peninsular War. (Austria, No. 90.)

victories, the chief of which, at Eckmühl (April 22nd), forced the Archduke with the Austrian right wing northwards towards Ratisbon, which was stormed on the following day. Charles now made for the Böhmer Wald, while his left wing on the south of the Danube fell back towards the Inn. Pushing his advantage to the utmost, the victor invaded Austria and forced Vienna to surrender (May 13th).

At that city Napoleon issued (May 17th) a decree which reveals the excess of his confidence. It struck down the temporal power of the Pope, and annexed to the French Empire the part of the Papal States which he had spared the year before. The form of the decree was as remarkable as its substance. With an effrontery only equalled by its historical falsity, it cited the example of "Charlemagne, my august predecessor, Emperor of the French"; and, after exalting the Imperial dignity, it proceeded to lower the Popes to the position of Bishops of Rome. The subordination of the spiritual to the civil power was also assured by the assigning of a yearly stipend of 2,000,000 francs to the Pope.

When Pius VII. protested against the seizure of his States, and hurled a bull of excommunication at the spoliator, Napoleon issued orders which led to his arrest; and shortly after midsummer the unfortunate pontiff was hurried away from Rome to Florence.

Meanwhile Napoleon had experienced an unlooked-for reverse. Though so far cowed by his defeats in Bavaria as to send Napoleon a cringing request for peace, to which the victor deigned no reply, the Archduke Charles obstinately clung to the northern bank of the Danube opposite the capital, and inflicted a severe defeat on the Emperor when the latter sought to drive him from Aspern-Essling (May 21st-22nd). Had the Austrian commander had that remorseless resolve which ever prompted Napoleon to wrest from Fortune her utmost favours, the white-coats might have driven their foes into the river; for at the close of both of those days of carnage they had a clear advantage. A French disaster was in fact averted only by the combined efforts of Napoleon, Masséna, Lannes, and General Mouton; and even they were for a time dis-

mayed by the frightful losses, and by the news that the bridges, over which alone they could retire, had been swept away by trees and barges sent down the flooded stream. But, as at Eylau, Napoleon's iron will imposed on his foes, and, under cover of darkness, the French were withdrawn into the island of Lobau, after losing some 25,000 men.[1]

Among them was that prince of vanguard leaders, Lannes. On hearing that his old friend was mortally wounded, the Emperor hurried to him, and tenderly embraced him. The interview, says Marbot, who was supporting the Marshal's shoulders, was most affecting, both these stern warriors displaying genuine emotion. And yet, it is reported that, after Lannes was removed to Ebersdorf, his last words were those of reproach to the Emperor for his ambition. At that time, however, the patient was delirious, and the words, if really uttered, were meaningless ; but the inventor of the anecdote might plead that it was consonant with the recent tenor of the Marshal's thoughts. Like all thoughtful soldiers, who placed France before Napoleon, Lannes was weary of these endless wars. After Jena his heart was not in the work ; and he wrote thus about Napoleon during the siege of Danzig : "I have always been the victim of my attachment to him. He only loves you by fits and starts, that is, when he has need of you." His presentiment was true. He was a victim to a war that was the outcome solely of Napoleon's Continental System, and not of the needs of France. He passed away, leaving a brilliant military fame and a reputation for soldierly republican frankness which was fast vanishing from the camps and *salons* of the Empire.[2]

[1] For the campaign see the memoirs of Macdonald, Marbot, Lejeune, Pelet, and Marmont. The last (vol. iii., p. 216) says that, had the Austrians pressed home their final attacks at Aspern, a disaster was inevitable ; or had Charles later on cut the French communications near Vienna, the same result must have followed. But the investigations of military historians leave no doubt that the Austrian troops were too exhausted by their heroic exertions, and their supplies of ammunition too much depleted, to warrant any risky moves for several days ; and by that time reinforcements had reached Napoleon. See too Angelis' "Der Erz-Herzog Karl."

[2] Thoumas, "Le Maréchal Lannes," pp. 205, 323 *et seq.* Desvernois ("Mems.," ch. xii.) notes that after Austerlitz none of Napoleon's wars had the approval of France.

As yet, however, Napoleon's genius and the martial ardour of his soldiers sufficed to overbear the halting efforts of Austria and her well-wishers. On retiring into Lobau Island he put forth to the utmost his extraordinary powers of organization. Boats brought vast supplies of stores and ammunition from Vienna, which the French still held. The menacing front of Masséna and Davoust imposed on the enemy. Reinforcements were hurried up from Bavaria. Tyrol was denuded of Franco-Bavarian troops, so that the peasants, under the lead of the brave innkeeper, Hofer, were able to organize a systematic defence. And a French army which had finally beaten the Austrians in Venetia, now began to drive them back into Hungary. In Poland the white-coats were held in check, and the Franco-Russian compact deterred Frederick William from making any move against France such as Prussian patriots ardently counselled.

To have done so would have been madness, unless England sent powerful aid on the side of Hanover; and that aid was not forthcoming. Yet the patriotic ardour of the Germans led to two daring efforts against the French. Schill, with a Prussian cavalry regiment, sought to seize Magdeburg, and failing there moved north in hopes of British help. His adventurous ride was ended by Napoleon's Dutch and North German troops, who closed in on him at Stralsund, and, on May 31st, cut to pieces his brave troop. Schill met a warrior's death : most of the survivors were sent to the galleys in France. Undeterred by this failure, the young Duke of Brunswick sought to rouse Saxony and Westphalia by a dashing cavalry raid (June); but, beyond showing the weakness of Jerome Bonaparte's rule and the general hatred of the French, he effected little: with his 2,000 followers he was finally saved by British cruisers (August) Had the British expedition, which in the ensuing autumn rotted away on Walcheren, been landed at Stralsund, or in Hanover during the spring, it is certain that Germany would have risen in Napoleon's rear ; and in that case, the doubtful struggle which closed at Wagram might have ended very differently.[1]

[1] For the Walcheren expedition see Alison, vol. viii.; James, vol. iv.; as also for Gambier's failure at Rochefort. The letters of Sir Byam Martin,

PASSAGE OF THE DOURO BY THE DIVISION UNDER THE COMMAND OF LT.-GEN. THE HON. EDWARD PAGET.

After a painting by H. Lêvéque.

All hopes for European independence centred in Wellesley and the Archduke Charles. Although there was no formal compact between England and Austria, yet the Hapsburgs rested their hopes largely on the diversions made by our troops. In the early part of the Peninsular campaign of 1809, these hopes were brilliantly fulfilled. Wellesley moved against Soult at Oporto, and, by a dextrous crossing of that river in his rear, compelled him to beat a calamitous retreat on Spain, with the loss of all his cannon and stores. The French reached Lugo an armed rabble, and were greeted there with jeers and execrations by the men of Ney's corps. The two Marshals themselves took up the quarrel, and so fierce were the taunts of Ney that Soult drew his sword, and a duel was barely averted.[1] An appearance of concord was restored during their operations in Galicia and Asturias: but no opportunity was missed of secretly thwarting the hated rival; and here, as all through the Peninsular War, the private jealousies of the French leaders fatally compromised the success of their arms. Wellesley, seeing that the operations in Galicia would never decide the war, began to prepare a deadly blow at the centre of French authority, Madrid.

While Wellesley thrust a thin wedge into the heart of Spain, the Archduke Charles was overthrown on the banks of the Danube. After drawing in reinforcements from France, the Rhenish Confederation, and Eugène's army of Italy, the French Emperor disposed of 180,000 highly trained troops, whom he massed in the Lobau Island, or on the right shore of the Danube. Every preparation was made for deceiving the Austrians as to the point of crossing and with complete success. With great labour the defenders threw up intrenchments facing the north side of the island. But, on a thick stormy night (July 4th), six bridges of boats were quickly swung across the stream lower down, that is, on the east side of Lobau, while a furious cannonade on the north side misled their foes. The crossing was effected without loss by Oudinot and Masséna; and sunrise saw the whole French

then cruising off Danzig, show how our officers wished to give timely aid to Schill ("Navy Records," vol. xii.).

[1] Captain Boothby's "A Prisoner of France," ch. iii.

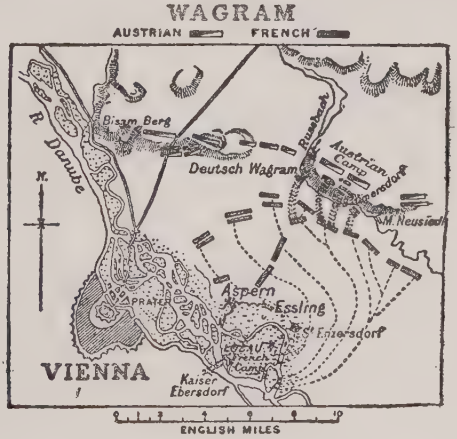
army advancing rapidly northwards, thereby outflanking the Austrian earthworks, which were now evacuated.

Charles was outmanœuvred and outnumbered. His brother, the Archduke John, was at Pressburg with 20,000 men, watched hitherto by Davoust. But the French Marshal cleverly withdrew his corps, leaving only enough men to impose on that unenterprising leader. Other Austrian detachments were also far away at the critical time, and thus Napoleon had a superiority of force of about 50,000 men. Nevertheless, the defence at Wagram was most obstinate (July 6th). Holding his own on the hills behind the Russbach, the Archduke swung forward his right in such strength as to drive back Masséna on Aspern ; but his weakened centre was now pushed back and endangered by the persistent vigour of Macdonald's onset. This success at the centre gave time for Davoust to wrest Neusiedel from the white-coats, a movement which would have been stopped or crushed, had the Archduke John obeyed his brother's orders and marched from the side of Pressburg on Napoleon's unguarded right flank. Finally, after an obstinate stand, the Austrians fell back in good order, effectively covering their retreat by a murderous artillery fire. A total loss of some 50,000 men, apportioned nearly equally on either side, was the chief result of this terrible day. It was not remarkable for brilliant tactics ; and, as at Aspern, the Austrians fully equalled their foes in courage.

Such was the battle of Wagram, one of the greatest of all time, if the number of combatants be counted, but one of the least decisive in its strictly military results. If we may compare Austerlitz with Blenheim, Wagram may with equal fitness be matched with the vast slaughter of Malplaquet exactly a century before. The French now felt the hardening of the national defence of Austria and the falling off in their own fighting powers. Marmont tells how, at the close of the day, the approach of the Archduke John's scouts struck panic into the conquerors, so that for a time the plain on the east was covered with runaway conscripts and disconcerted plunderers. The incident proved the deterioration of the Grand Army from the times of Ulm and Jena. Raw conscripts raised

before their time and hurriedly drafted into the line had impaired its steadiness, and men noted as another ominous fact that few unwounded prisoners were taken from the Austrians, and only nine guns and one colour. In fact, the only reputation enhanced was that of Macdonald, who for his great services at the centre enjoyed the unique honour of receiving a Marshal's bâton from Napoleon on the field of battle.

Had the Archduke Charles been made of the same stuff as Wellington, the campaign might still have been retrieved.



But softness and irresolution were the characteristics of Austria's generals no less than of her rulers.[1] The Hapsburg armies were still led with the old leisurely *insouciance;* and their counsels swayed to and fro under the wavering impulses of a seemingly decrepit dynasty. Francis had many good qualities: he was a good husband and father, and his kindly manners endeared him to the Viennese even in the midst of defeat. But he was capricious and shortsighted; anything outside of the well-worn ruts of routine vexed and alarmed him; and it is a supreme proof of the greatness and courage of his

[1] For Charles's desire to sue for peace after the first battles on the Upper Danube, see Häusser, vol. iii., p. 341; also, after Wagram, *ib.*, pp. 412–413.

reforming Minister, Stadion, that his innovations should have been tolerated for so long. Now that disasters were shaking his throne he began to suspect the reformer; and Stadion confessed to the publicist, Gentz, that it was impossible to reckon on the Emperor for a quarter of an hour together, unless one stayed by him all the twenty-four hours. — "After a great defeat, he will get himself out of the dust and will calmly commend us to God." — This was what now happened. Another failure at Znaim so daunted the Archduke that he sued for an armistice (July 12th). For this there was some excuse. The latest news both from Spain and Prussia inspired the hope that, if time were gained, important diversions might be made in both quarters.

As we have seen, Sir Arthur Wellesley opened the campaign with a brilliant success, and then prepared to strike at the heart of the French power. The memorable campaign of Talavera was the result. Relying on promises of aid from the Spanish Junta and from their cross-grained commander, Cuesta, he led a small British force up the valley of the Tagus to seize Madrid, while the chief French armies were engaged in distant provinces. In one sense he achieved his aim. He compelled the enemy to loose their hold on those provinces and concentrate to save the capital. And before they fully effected their concentration, he gave battle to King Joseph and Marshals Jourdan and Victor at Talavera (July 28th). Skilfully posting the Spaniards behind intrenchments and in gardens where their raw levies could fight with every advantage, he extended his thin red lines — he had only 17,000 British troops — along a ridge stretching up to a plateau that dominated the broken ground north of the town. On that hill Wellesley planted his left: and all the efforts of Victor to turn that wing or to break it by charges across the intervening ravine were bloodily beaten off.

The fierce heat served but to kindle French and British to greater fury. Finally, the dashing charge of our 23rd dragoons and the irresistible advance of the 48th regiment of foot overthrew the enemy's centre; and as the day waned, the 30,000 French retired, with a loss of 17 can-

non and of 7,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners. Had the other Spanish armies now offered the support which Wellesley expected, he would doubtless have seized Madrid. He had written three days before Talvera: "With or without a battle we shall be at Madrid soon." But his allies now failed him utterly: they did not hold the mountain passes which confronted Soult in his march from Salamanca into the valley of the Tagus; and they left the British forces half starving. — "We are here worse off than in a hostile country," wrote our commander; "never was an army so ill used: we had no assistance from the Spanish army: we were obliged to unload our ammunition and our treasure in order to employ the cars in the removal of our sick and wounded." Meanwhile Soult, with 50,000 men, was threading his way easily through the mountains and threatened to cut us off from Portugal: but by a rapid retreat Wellesley saved his army, vowing that he would never again trust Spanish offers of help.[1]

Far more dispiriting was the news that reached the Austrian negotiators from the North Sea. There the British Government succeeded in eclipsing all its former achievements in forewarning foes and disgusting its friends. Very early in the year, the men of Downing Street knew that Austria was preparing to fight Napoleon and built her hopes of success, partly on the Peninsular War, partly on a British descent in Hanover, where everything was ripe for revolution. Unfortunately, we were still, formally, at war with her: and the conclusion of the treaty of peace was so long delayed at Vienna that July was almost gone before the Austrian ratification reached London, and our armada set sail from Dover.[2] The result is well known. Official favourit-

[1] Napier, bk. viii., chs. ii. and iii. In the App. of vol. iii. of "Wellington's Despatches" is Napoleon's criticism on the movements of Joseph and the French marshals. He blames them for their want of *ensemble*, and for the precipitate attack which Victor advised at Talavera. He concluded: "As long as you attack good troops like the English in good positions, without reconnoitring them, you will lead men to death *en pure perte*."

[2] An Austrian envoy had been urging promptitude at Downing Street. On June 1st he wrote to Canning: "The promptitude of the enemy has

ism handed over the command of 40,000 troops to Earl Chatham, who wasted precious days in battering down the walls of Flushing when he should have struck straight at the goal now aimed at, Antwerp. That fortress was therefore ready to beat him off; and he finally withdrew his army into the Isle of Walcheren, into whose fever-laden swamps Napoleon had refused to send a single French soldier. A tottering remnant was all that survived by the close of the year: and the climax of our national disgrace was reached when a court-martial acquitted the commanders. Napoleon would have had them shot.

Helpless as the old monarchies were to cope with Napoleon, a wild longing for vengeance was beginning to throb among the peoples. It showed itself in a remarkable attempt on his life during a review at Schönbrunn. A delicate youth named Staps, son of a Thuringian pastor, made his way to the palace, armed with a long knife, intending to stab him while he read a petition (October 12th). Berthier and Rapp, noting the lad's importunity, had him searched and brought before Napoleon. "What did you mean to do with that knife?" asked the Emperor. "Kill you," was the reply. "You are an idiot or an Illuminat." "I am not an idiot and do not know what an Illuminat is." "Then you are diseased." "No, I am quite well." "Why do you wish to kill me?" "Because you are the curse of my Fatherland." "You are a fanatic; I will forgive you and spare your life." "I want no forgiveness." "Would you thank me if I pardoned you?" "I would seek to kill you again." The quiet firmness with which Staps gave these replies and then went to his doom made a deep impression on Napoleon; and he sought to hurry on the conclusion of peace with these odd Germans whom he could conquer but not convince.

always been the key to his success. A long experience has proved this to the world, which seems hitherto not to have profited by this knowledge." On July 29th Canning acknowledged the receipt of the Austrian ratification of peace with us, "accompanied by the afflicting intelligence of the armistice concluded on the 12th instant between the Austrian and French armies." He adds that England will make every effort to help Austria, but that the destination of the fleet is changed "because the information of the Austrian Court as to the state of North Germany was found to be inexact."

The Emperor Francis was now resigned to his fate, but he refused to hear of giving up his remaining seacoast in Istria. On this point Metternich strove hard to bend Napoleon's will, but received as a final answer: "Then war is unavoidable."[1] In fact, the victor knew that Austria was in his power. The Archduke Charles had thrown up his command, the soldiery were depressed, and a great part of the Empire was in the hands of the French. England's efforts had failed; and of all the isolated patriotic movements in Germany only that of the Tyrolese mountaineers still struggled on. Napoleon could therefore dictate his own terms in the Treaty of Schönbrunn (October 14th), which he announced as complete, when as yet Francis had not signed it.[2] Austria thereby recognized Joseph as King of Spain, and ceded Salzburg and the Inn-viertel to Napoleon, to be transferred by him to Bavaria. To the French Empire she yielded up parts of Austrian Friuli and Carinthia, besides Carniola, the city and district of Trieste, and portions of Croatia and Dalmatia to the south of the River Save. Her spoils of the old Polish lands now went to aggrandize the Duchy of Warsaw, a small strip of Austrian Galicia also going to Russia. Besides losing 3,500,000 subjects, Austria was mulcted in an indemnity of £3,400,000, and again bound herself to exclude all British products. By a secret clause she agreed to limit her army to 150,000 men.

Perhaps the severest loss was the abandonment of the faithful Tyrolese. After Aspern, the Emperor Francis promised that he would never lay down his arms until they were re-united with his Empire. This promise now went the way of the many fond hopes of reform and championship of German nationality which her ablest men had lately cherished, and the Empire settled down in torpor and bankruptcy. In dumb wrath and despair Austrian patriots looked on, while the Tyrolese were beaten down by French, Bavarian, and Italian forces. Hofer finally took to the hills, was betrayed by a friend, and was taken to Mantua. Some of the officers who there tried him desired to spare his life, but a special

[1] Beer, p. 441.
[2] Vandal, vol. ii., p. 161; Metternich, vol. i., p. 114.

despatch of Napoleon[1] ordered his execution, and the brave mountaineer fell, with the words on his lips: "Long live the Emperor Francis." Tyrol, meanwhile, was parcelled out between Bavaria, Illyria, and the Kingdom of Italy; but bullets and partitions were of no avail against the staunch patriotism of her people, and the Tyrolese campaign boded ill for Napoleon if monarchs, generals, and statesmen should ever be inspired by the sturdy faith and hardihood of that noble peasantry.

As yet, however, prudence and timidity reigned supreme. Though the Czar uttered some snappish words at the threatening increase to the Duchy of Warsaw, he still posed as Napoleon's ally. The Swedes, weary of their hopeless strifes with France, Russia, and Denmark, deposed the still bellicose Gustavus IV.; and his successor, Charles XIII., made peace with those Powers, retaining Swedish Pomerania, but only at the cost of submitting to the Continental System. Prussia seemed, to official eyes, utterly cowed. The Hapsburgs, having failed in their bold championship of the cause of reform and of German nationality, now fell back into a policy marked by timid opportunism and decorously dull routine.

The change was marked by the retirement of Stadion, a man whose enterprising character, no less than his enthusiasm for reform, ill fitted him for the time of compromise and subservience now at hand. He it was who had urged Austria forward in the paths of progress and had sought safety in the people: he was the Stein of Austria. But now, on the eve of peace, he earnestly begged to be allowed to resign the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and the Emperor Francis thereupon summoned to that seemingly thankless office a young diplomatist, who was destined to play a foremost part in the mighty drama of Napoleon's overthrow, and thereafter to wield by his astute policy almost as great an influence in Central and Southern Europe as the autocrat himself.

Metternich was born at Coblentz in 1773, and was therefore four years the junior of Napoleon. He came of an old family of the Rhineland, and his father's position in

[1] Letter of February 10th, 1810, quoted by Lanfrey. See, too, the "Mems." of Prince Eugène, vol. vi., p. 277.

the service of the old Empire secured him early entrance into the diplomatic circle. After acting as secretary to the Imperial delegates at the Congress of Rastatt, he occupied the post of Austrian ambassador successively at the Courts of Dresden and Berlin; and in 1806 he was suddenly called to take up the embassy in Paris. There he displayed charms of courtly tact, and lively and eloquent conversation, which won Napoleon's admiration and esteem. He was looked on as a Gallophil; and, like Bismarck at a later crisis, he used his social gifts and powers of cajolery so as to gain a correct estimate of the characters of his future opponents.

Yet, besides these faculties of *finesse* and intrigue — and the Miltonic Belial never told lies with more winsome grace — Metternich showed at times a manly composure and firmness, even when Napoleon unmasked a searching fire of diplomatic questions and taunts. Of this he had given proof shortly before the outbreak of the late war, and his conduct had earned the thanks of the other ambassadors for giving the French Emperor a lesson in manners, while the autocrat liked him none the less, but rather the more, for standing up to him. But now, after the war, all was changed; craft was more serviceable than fortitude; and the gay Rhinelander brought to the irksome task of subservience to the conqueror a courtly *insouciance* under which he nursed the hope of ultimate revenge. — "From the day when peace is signed," he wrote to the Emperor Francis on August 10th, 1809, "we must confine our system to tacking and turning, and flattering. Thus alone may we possibly preserve our existence, till the day of general deliverance."[1] This was to be the general drift of Austrian policy for the next four years; and it may be granted that only by bending before the blast could that sore-stricken monarchy be saved from destruction. An opportunity soon occurred of carrying the new system into effect. Metternich offered the conqueror an Austrian Archduchess as a bride.

After the humiliation of the Hapsburgs and of the Spanish patriots, nothing seemed wanting to Napoleon's triumph but an heir who should found a durable dynasty.

[1] "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 365 (Eng. ed.).

This aim was now to be reached. As soon as the Emperor returned to Paris, his behaviour towards Josephine showed a marked reserve. The passage communicating between their private apartments was closed, and the gleams of triumphant jealousy that flashed from her sisters-in-law warned Josephine of her approaching doom. The divorce so long bruited by news-mongers was at hand. The Emperor broke the tidings to his consort in the private drawing-room of the Tuileries on November 30th, and strove to tone down the harshness of his decision by basing it on the imperative needs of the State. But she spurned the dictates of statecraft. With all her faults, she was affectionate and tender; she was a woman first and an Empress afterwards; she now clung to Napoleon, not merely for the splendour of the destiny which he had opened to her, but also from genuine love.

Their relations had curiously changed. At the outset she had slighted his mad devotion by her shallow coldness and occasional infidelities, until his lava-like passion petrified. Thenceforth it was for her to woo, and woo in vain. For years past she had to bemoan the waning of his affection and his many conjugal sins. And now the chasm, which she thought to have spanned by the religious ceremony on the eve of the coronation, yawned at her feet. The woman and the Empress in her shrank back from the black void of the future; and with piteous reproaches she flung back the orders of the Emperor and the soothings of the husband. Napoleon, it would seem, had nerved himself against such an outbreak. In vain did Josephine sink down at his feet with heart-rending cries that she would never survive the disgrace: failing to calm her himself, he opened the door and summoned the prefect of the palace, Bausset, and bade him bear her away to her private apartments. Down the narrow stairs she was borne, the Emperor lifting her feet and Bausset supporting her shoulders, until, half fainting, she was left to the sympathies of her women and the attentions of Corvisart. But hers was a wound that no sympathy or skill could cure.[1]

On his side, Napoleon felt the wrench. Not only the

[1] Bausset, "Mems.," ch. xix.

ghost of his early love, but his dislike of new associates and novel ways cried out against the change. "In separating myself from my wife," Napoleon once said to Talleyrand, "I renounce much. I should have to study the tastes and habits of a young woman. Josephine accommodates herself to everything: she understands me perfectly." [1] But his boundless triumphs, his alliance with the Czar and total overthrow of the Bourbons and the Pope, had fed the fires of his ambition. He aspired to give the *mot d'ordre* to the universe; and he scrupled not to put aside a consort who could not help him to found a dynasty. Yet it was not without pangs of sorrow and remorse. His laboured, panting breath and almost gasping words left on Bausset the impression that he was genuinely affected; and, consummate actor though he was, we may well believe that he felt the parting from his early associations. Underneath his generally cold exterior he hid a nervous nature, dominated by an inflexible will, but which now and again broke through all restraint, bathing the beloved object with sudden tenderness or blasting a foe with fiery passion. And it would seem that Josephine's pangs had power to reawaken the feelings of his more generous youth. The ceremony of divorce took place on December 15th, Josephine declaring with agonized pride that she gave her assent for the welfare of France.

Already the new marriage negotiations had begun. They are unique even amidst the frigid annals of royal betrothals. The French ambassador, Caulaincourt, was charged to make definite overtures at St. Petersburg for the hand of the Czar's younger sister; the conditions could easily be arranged; religion need be no difficulty; but time was pressing; the Emperor had need of an heir; "we are counting the minutes here," ran the despatch; and an answer was expected from St. Petersburg after an interval of *two days*.[2] The request caused Alexander the

[1] Mme. de Rémusat, "Mems.," ch. xxvii.

[2] Tatischeff, "Alexandre et Napoléon," p. 519. Welschinger, "Le Divorce de Napoléon," ch. ii.; he also examines the alleged irregularities of the religious marriage with Josephine; Fesch and most impartial authorities brushed them aside as a flimsy excuse.

greatest perplexity. He parried it with the reply, correct enough in form as in fact, that the disposal of his sister rested with the Dowager Empress. But her hostility to Napoleon was well known. After the half overtures of Erfurt she had at once betrothed her elder daughter to the Duke of Oldenburg. No similar escape was now possible for the younger one: but, after leaving Napoleon's request unanswered until February 4th, the reply was then despatched that the tender age of the princess, she being only twenty years old, formed an insuperable obstacle.

Some such answer had long been expected at Paris. Metternich asserts in his "Memoirs" that Napoleon had caused Laborde, one of his diplomatic agents at Vienna, tentatively to sound that Court as to his betrothal with the Archduchess Marie Louise. But the French archives show that the first hint came from Metternich, who saw in it a means of weakening the Franco-Russian alliance and saving Austria from further disasters.[1] A little later the Countess Metternich was at Paris; and great was her surprise when, on January 2nd, 1810, Josephine informed her that she favoured a marriage between Napoleon and Marie Louise. "I spoke to him of it yesterday," she said; "his choice is not yet fixed; but he thinks that this would be his choice if he were sure of its being accepted." Thereafter the Countess received the most flattering attentions at Court, a proof that the Hapsburg match was now favoured, even though the coyness of the Czar was as yet unknown.

At the close of January a Privy Council was held at the Tuileries to decide on the imperial bride. The votes were nearly equal: four voted for Austria, four for Saxony, and three for Russia. After listening quietly to the arguments, Napoleon summed up the discussion by pronouncing firmly and warmly in favour of Austria. The marriage contract was therefore drawn up on February

[1] Metternich's despatch of December 25th, 1809, in his "Mems.," vol. ii., § 150. The first hints were dropped by him to Laborde on November 29th (Vandal, vol. ii., pp. 204, 543): they reached Napoleon's ears about December 15th. For the influence of these marriage negotiations in preparing for Napoleon's rupture with the Czar, see chap. xxxii. of this work.

7th ; and Berthier was despatched to Vienna to claim the hand of Marie Louise. He entered that city over the ruins of the old ramparts, which were now being dismantled in accordance with the French demands.

The marriage took place at Vienna by proxy ; the bride was conducted to Paris ; and the final ceremony took place at Notre Dame on April 2nd, but not until the union had been consummated. Such were Napoleon's second wooing and wedding. Nevertheless, he showed himself an attentive and even indulgent spouse, and he remarked at St. Helena that if Josephine was all grace and charm, Marie Louise was innocence and nature herself.

The Austrian marriage was an event of the first importance. It gained a few years' respite for the despairing Hapsburgs, and gave tardy satisfaction to Talleyrand's statesmanlike scheme of a Franco-Austrian alliance which should be in the best sense conservative. Had Napoleon taken this step after Austerlitz in the way that his counsellor advised, possibly Europe might have reached a condition of stable equilibrium, always provided that he gave up his favourite scheme of partitioning Turkey. But that was not to be ; and when Austria finally yielded up Marie Louise as an unpicturesque Iphigenia on the marriage altar, she did so only as a desperate device for appeasing an inexorable destiny. And, strange to say, she succeeded. For Alexander took offence at the marriage negotiations ; and thus was opened a breach in the Franco-Russian alliance which other events were rapidly to widen, until Western and Central Europe hurled themselves against the East, and reached Moscow.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE EMPIRE AT ITS HEIGHT

Napoleon's star had now risen to its zenith. After his marriage with a daughter of the most ancient of continental dynasties, nothing seemed lacking to his splendour. He had humbled Pope and Emperor alike: Germany crouched at his feet: France, Italy, and the Confederation of the Rhine gratefully acknowledged the benefits of his vigorous sway: the Czar was still following the lead given at Erfurt: Sweden had succumbed to the pressure of the two Emperors: and Turkey survived only because it did not yet suit Napoleon to shear her asunder: he must first complete the commercial ruin of England and drive Wellington into the sea. Then events would at last be ripe for the oriental schemes which the Spanish Rising had postponed.

He might well hope that England's strength was running out: near the close of 1810 the three per cent. consols sank to sixty-five, and the declared bankruptcies averaged 250 a month. The failure of the Walcheren expedition had led to terrible loss of men and treasure, and had clouded over the reputation of her leaders. After mutual recriminations Canning and Castlereagh resigned office and fought a duel. Shortly afterwards the Premier, the Duke of Portland, fell ill and resigned: his place was taken by Mr. Perceval, a man whose sole recommendation for the post was his conscientious Toryism and powers of dull plodding. Ruled by an ill-assorted Ministry and a King whose reason was now hopelessly overclouded, weakened by the strangling grip of the Continental System, England seemed on the verge of ruin; and, encouraged alike by the factious conduct of our parliamentary Opposition and by Soult's recent conquest of Andalusia Napoleon bent himself to the final

grapple by extending his coast system, and by sending Masséna and his choicest troops into Spain to drive the leopards into the sea.

The limits of our space prevent any description of the ensuing campaign of Torres Vedras; and we must refer our readers to the ample canvas of Napier if they would realize the sagacity of Wellington in constructing to the north of Lisbon that mighty *tête de pont* for the Sea Power against Masséna's veteran army. After dealing the staggering blow of Busaco at that presumptuous Marshal, our great leader fell back, through a tract which he swept bare of supplies, on this sure bulwark, and there watched the French host of some 65,000 men waste away amidst the miseries of hunger and the rains and diseases of autumn. At length, in November, Masséna drew off to positions near Santarem, where he awaited the succour which Napoleon ordered Soult to bring. It was in vain: Soult, puffed up by his triumphs in Andalusia, was resolved to play his own game and reduce Badajoz; he won his point but marred the campaign; and, at last, foiled by Wellington's skilful tactics, Masséna beat a retreat northwards out of Portugal after losing some 35,000 men (March, 1811). Wellington's success bore an immeasurable harvest of results. The unmanly whinings of the English Opposition were stilled; the replies of the Czar to Napoleon's demands grew firmer; and the patriots of the Peninsula stiffened their backs in a resistance so stubborn, albeit unskilful, that 370,000 French troops utterly failed to keep Wellington in check, and to stamp out the national defence in the summer of 1811.

In truth, Napoleon had exasperated the Spaniards no less than their *soi disant* king, by a series of provocations extending over the year 1810. On the plea that Spain must herself meet the expenses of the war, he erected the four northern provinces into commands for French generals, who were independent of his brother's authority and levied all the taxes over that vast area (February). On May 29th he withdrew Burgos and Valladolid from Joseph's control, and divided the greater part of Spain for military and administrative purposes into districts that were French satrapies in all but name. The decree was

doubly disastrous: it gave free play to the feuds of the French chiefs; and it seemed to the Spaniards to foreshadow a speedy partition of Spain. The surmise was correct. Napoleon intended to unite to France the lands between the Pyrenees and the Ebro. Indeed, in his conception, the conquest of Portugal was mainly desirable because it would provide his brother with an indemnity in the west for the loss of his northern provinces. Joseph's protests against such a partition of the land, which Napoleon had sworn at Bayonne to keep intact, were disregarded; but letters on this subject fell into the hands of the Spanish guerillas and were published by order of the Regency at Cadiz. Despised by the Spaniards, flouted by Napoleon, set at defiance by the French satraps, and reduced wellnigh to bankruptcy, the puppet King felt his position insupportable, and, hurrying to Paris, tendered his resignation of the crown (May, 1811). In his anxiety to huddle up the scandal, Napoleon appeased his brother, promised him one-fourth of the taxes levied by the French commanders, and coaxed or drove him to resume his thankless task at Madrid. But the doggedness of the Emperor's resolve may be measured by the fact that, even when on the brink of war with Russia, he defied Spanish national sentiment by annexing Catalonia to France (March, 1812).

It seems strange that Napoleon did not himself proceed to Spain in order to direct the operations in person and thus still the jealousies of the Marshals which so hampered his armies. Wellington certainly feared his coming. At a later date he told Earl Stanhope that Napoleon was vastly superior to any of his Marshals: "There was nothing like him. He suited a French army so exactly. . . . His presence on the field made a difference of 40,000 men."[1] That estimate is certainly modest if one looks not merely at tactics but at the strategy of the whole Peninsular War. But the Emperor did not

[1] "Conversations with the Duke of Wellington," p. 9. The disobedience of Ney and Soult did much to ruin Masséna's campaign, and he lost the battle of Fuentès d'Onoro mainly through that of Bessières. Still, as he failed to satisfy Napoleon's maxim, "Succeed: I judge men only by results," he was disgraced.

again come into Spain. At the outset of 1810 he prepared to do so; but, as soon as the Austrian marriage was arranged, he abandoned this salutary project.

There were thenceforth several reasons why he should remain in or near Paris. His attentions to his young wife, and his desire to increase the splendour of the Court, counted for much. Yet more important was it to curb the clericals (now incensed at the imprisonment of the Pope), and sharply to watch the intrigues of the royalists and other malcontents. Public opinion, also, still needed to be educated; the constant drain of men for the wars and the increase in the price of necessaries led to grumblings in the Press, which claimed the presence of his Argus eye and the adoption of a very stringent censorship.[1] But, above all, there was the commercial war with England. This could be directed best from Paris, where he could speedily hear of British endeavours to force goods into Germany, Holland, or Italy, and of any change in our maritime code.

Important as was the war in Spain, it was only one phase of his world-wide struggle with the mistress of the seas; and he judged that if she bled to death under his Continental System, the Peninsular War must subside into a guerilla strife, Spain thereafter figuring merely as a greater Vendée. Accordingly, the year 1810 sees the climax of his great commercial experiment.

The first land to be sacrificed to this venture was Holland. For many months the Emperor had been discontented with his brother Louis, who had taken into his head the strange notion that he reigned there by divine right. As Napoleon pathetically said at St. Helena, when reviewing the conduct of his brothers, "If I made one a king, he imagined that he was *King by the grace of God*. He was no longer my lieutenant: he was one enemy more for me to watch." A singular fate for this king-maker, that he should be forgotten and the holy oil alone remembered! Yet Louis probably used that mediæval notion as a shield against his brother's dictation. The

[1] Decree of February 5th, 1810. See Welschinger, "La Censure sous le premier Empire," p. 31. For the seizure of Madame de Staël's "Allemagne" and her exile, see her preface to "Dix Années d'Exil."

tough Bonaparte nature brooked not the idea of mere lieutenancy. He declined to obey orders from the brother whom he secretly detested. He flatly refused to be transferred from the Hague to Madrid, or to put in force the burdensome decrees of the Continental System.

On his side, Napoleon upbraided him with governing too softly, and with seeking popularity where he should seek control. After the Walcheren expedition, he chid him severely for allowing the English fleet ever to show its face in the Scheldt; for "the fleets of that Power ought to find nothing but rocks of iron" in that river, "which is as important to France as the Thames to England."[1] But the head and front of his offending was that British goods still found their way into Holland. In vain did the Emperor forbid that American ships which had touched at English ports should be debarred from those of Holland. In vain did he threaten to close the Scheldt and Rhine to Dutch barges. Louis held on his way, with kindly patience towards his merchants, and with a Bonapartist obstinacy proof against fraternal advice or threats. At last, early in 1810, Napoleon sent troops to occupy Walcheren and neighbouring Dutch lands. It seemed for a time as though this was but a device to extort favourable terms of peace from England in return for an offer that France would not annex Holland. Negotiations to this effect were set on foot through the medium of Ouvrard and Labouchere, son-in-law of the banker Baring: Fouché also, without the knowledge of his master, ventured to put forth a diplomatic feeler as to a possible Anglo-French alliance against the United States, an action for which he was soon very properly disgraced.[2]

The negotiation failed, as it deserved to do. Our objections were, not merely to the absurd proposal that we should give up our maritime code if Napoleon would abstain from annexing Holland and the Hanseatic towns, but still more against the man himself and his whole policy.

[1] Mollien, "Mems.," vol. iii., p. 183.

[2] Fouché retired to Italy, and finally settled at Aix. His place at the Ministry of Police was taken by Savary, Duc de Rovigo. See Madelin's "Fouché," chap. xx.

THE REVERSE OF THE BOULOGNE MEDAL USED AGAIN, WITH

THE MOTTO: "TOTO DIVISOS ORBE BRITANNOS." 1806.

NAPOLEON AND

MARIE LOUISE, 1810.

ÉLISE BONAPARTE,

1810.

NAPOLEONIC MEDALS, 1806-10.

From Delaroche's "Trésor de Numismatique."

We had every reason to distrust the good faith of the man who had betrayed the Turks at Tilsit, Portugal at Fontainebleau, and the Spaniards at Bayonne. To pause in the strife, to relax our hold on our new colonies, and to desert the Spaniards, in order to preserve the merely titular independence of Holland and the Hanse Towns, would have been an act of singular simplicity. Nor does Napoleon seem to have expected it. He wrote to his Foreign Minister, Champagny, on March 20th, 1810: "From not having made peace sooner, England has lost Naples, Spain, Portugal, and the market of Trieste. If she delays much longer, she will lose Holland, the Hanse Towns, and Sicily." And surely this Sibylline conduct of his required that he should annex these lands and all Europe in order to exact a suitable price from the exhausted islanders. Such was the corollary of the Continental System.

Meanwhile Louis, nettled by the inquisitions of the French *douaniers*, and by the order of his brother to seize all American ships in Dutch ports, was drawing on himself further reproaches and threats: "Louis, you are incorrigible . . . you do not want to reign for any length of time. States are governed by reason and policy, and not by acrimony and weakness." Twenty thousand French troops were approaching Amsterdam to bring him to reason, when the young ruler decided to be rid of this royal mummery. On the night of July 1st he fled from Haarlem, and travelled swiftly and secretly eastwards until he reached Teplitz, in Bohemia. The ignominy of this flight rested on the brother who had made kingship a mockery. The refugee left behind him the reputation of a man who, lovable by nature but soured by domestic discords, sought to shield his subjects from the ruin into which the rigid application of the Continental System was certain to plunge them. That fate now befell the unhappy little land. On July 9th it was annexed to the French Empire, and all the commercial decrees were carried out as rigidly at Rotterdam as at Havre.

At the close of the year, Napoleon's coast system was extended to the borders of Holstein by the annexation of Oldenburg, the northern parts of Berg, Westphalia, and Hanover, along with Lauenburg and the Hanse Towns,

Bremen, Hamburg, and Lübeck. The little Swiss Republic of Valais was also absorbed in the Empire.

This change in North Germany, which carried the French flag to the shores of the Baltic, was his final ex-

CENTRAL EUROPE AFTER 1810

pedient for assuring England's commercial ruin. As far back as February, 1798, he had recommended the extension of French influence over the Hanse Towns as a means of reducing his most redoubtable foe to surrender, and now there were two special reasons for this annexation. First,

the ships of Oldenburg had been largely used for conveying British produce into North Germany ;[1] and secondly, the French commercial code was so rigorous that no officials with even the semblance of independence could be trusted with its execution. On August 5th a decree had been promulgated at the Trianon, near Versailles, which imposed enormous duties on every important colonial product. Cotton — especially that from America — sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa, and other articles were subjected to dues, generally of half their value and irrespective of their place of production.

Traders were ordered to declare their possession of all colonial wares and to pay the duty, under pain of confiscation. Dépôts of such goods within four days' distance from the frontiers of the Empire were held to be clandestine ; and troops were sent forthwith into Germany, Switzerland, and Spain to seize such stores, a proceeding which aroused the men of Stuttgart, Frankfurt, and Berne to almost open resistance. It is difficult to see the reason for this decree, except on the supposition that the Continental System did not stop British imports, and that all tropical products were British.

Napoleon's own correspondence shows that he believed this to be so. At that same time he issued orders that all colonial produce found at Stettin should be confiscated because it was evidently English property brought on American ships. He further recommended Murat and Eugène to press hard on such wares in order to replenish their exchequers and raise funds for restoring their commerce. Eugène must, however, be careful to tax American and colonial cotton most heavily, while letting in that of the Levant on favourable terms.

Jerome, too, was bidden rigorously to enforce the Trianon tariff in Westphalia ; and the hint was to be passed on to Prussia and the Rhenish Confederation that, by subjecting colonial goods to these enormous imposts, those States would gain several millions of francs "and the loss would fall partly on English commerce and partly on the smugglers."[2] In fact, all his acts and words at

[1] Porter, "Progress of the Nation," p. 388.

[2] Letters of August 6th, 7th, 29th. The United States had just repealed their Non-Intercourse Act of 1807. For their relations with

this time reveal the densest ignorance, not only of political economy, but of the elementary facts of commerce, as when he imagined that officials, who were sufficiently hard worked with watching a nimble host of some 100,000 smugglers along an immense frontier, would also be able to distinguish between Syrian and American cottons, and to exact 800 francs from 100 kilogrammes of the latter, as against 400 francs from the former, or that six times as much could ever be levied on Chinese teas as on other teas! Such a tariff called for a highly drilled army of those sufficiently rare individuals, honest *douaniers*, endowed also with Napoleonic activity and omniscience. But, as Chaptal remarked, the Emperor had never thought much about the needs of commerce, and he despised merchants as persons who had "neither a faith nor a country, whose sole object was gain." His own notion about commerce was that he could "make it manœuvre like a regiment"; and this military conception of trade led him to entertain the fond hope that exchequers benefited by confiscation and prohibitive tariffs, that a "national commerce" could be speedily built up by cutting off imports, and that the burden of loss in the present commercial war fell on England and not on the continental consumer.

Such was the penalty which the great man paid for scorning all new knowledge as *idéalogie*. The principles set forth by Quesnay, Turgot, and Adam Smith were to him mere sophistical juggling. He once said to Mollien: "I seek the good that is practical, not the ideal best: the world is very old: we must profit by its experience: it teaches that old practices are worth more than new theories: you are not the only one who knows trade secrets."[1] This was his general attitude towards the exponents of new financial or commercial views. Indeed, we can hardly think of this great champion of external control and state intervention favouring the open-handed methods of *laisser faire*. Unhappy France, that gave this motto to the world

Napoleon and England, see Channing's "The United States of America," chs. vi. and vii.; also the Anglo-American correspondence in Cobbett's "Register for 1809 and 1810."

[1] Mollien, "Mems." vol. i., p. 316.

but let her greatest ruler emphasize her recent reaction towards commercial mediævalism! Luckless Emperor, who aspired to found the United States of Europe, but outraged the principle which most surely and lastingly works for international harmony, that of Free Trade!

While the Trianon tariff sought to hinder the import of England's colonial products, or, failing that, to reap a golden harvest from them, Napoleon further endeavoured to terrify continental dealers from accepting any of her manufactures. His Fontainebleau decree of October 18th, 1810, ordered that all such goods should be seized and publicly burnt; and five weeks later special tribunals were instituted for enforcing these ukases and for trying all persons, whether smugglers caught red-handed or shopkeepers who inadvertently offered for sale the cottons of Lancashire or the silks of Bengal.

The canon was now complete. It only remained to convert the world to the new gospel of pacific war. The results were soon clearly visible in a sudden rise of prices throughout France, Germany, and Italy. Raw cotton now fetched 10 to 11 francs, sugar 6 to 7 francs, coffee 8 francs, and indigo 21 francs, per pound, or on the average about ten times the prices then ruling at London.[1] The reason for this advantage to the English consumer and manufacturer is clear. England swayed the tropics and held the seas; and, having a monopoly of colonial produce, she could import it easily and abundantly, while the continental purchaser had ultimately to pay for the risks incurred by his shopkeeper, by British merchants, and by their smugglers, who "ran in" from Heligoland, Jersey, or Sicily. These classes vied in their efforts to prick holes in the continental decrees. Bargees and women, dogs and hearses, were pressed into service against Napoleon. The last-named device was for a time tried with much success near Hamburg, until the French authorities, wondering at the strange increase of funerals in a river-side suburb, peered into the hearses, and found them stuffed full with bales of British merchandise. This gruesome plan failing, others were tried. Large quantities of sand were brought

[1] Tooke, "Hist. of Prices," vol. i., p. 311; Mollien, vol. iii., p. 135, 289; Pasquier, vol. i., p. 295; Chaptal, p. 275.

from the seashore, until, unfortunately for the housewives, some inquisitive official found that it hailed from the West Indies.

Or again, devious routes were resorted to. Sugar was smuggled from London into Germany by way of Salonica, that being now almost the only neutral port open to British commerce. Thence it was borne in panniers on the backs of mules over the Balkans to Belgrade, where it was transferred to barges and carried up the Danube. Another illicit trade route was from the desolate shores of Dalmatia through Hungary. The writer of a pamphlet, "England, Ireland, and America," states that his firm then employed 500 horses on and near that coast in carrying British goods into Central Europe, and that the cost of getting them into France was "about £28 per cwt., or more than fifty times the present freight to Calcutta." In fact, the result of the Emperor's economic experiments may be summed up in the statement of Chaptal that the general run of prices in France was higher by one-third than it was before 1789.

Now the merest tyro might see that the difference in price above the normal level was paid by the consumer. The colonial producer, the British merchant and shipper were certainly harassed, and trade was dislocated; but, as Mollien observed, commerce soon adapted itself to altered conditions; and merchants never parted with their wares without getting hard cash or resorting to the primitive method of barter. Money was also frequently melted down in France and Germany so as to effect bargains with England in bars of metal. And so, in one way or another, trade was carried on, with infinite discomfort and friction, it is true; but it never wholly ceased even between England and France direct.

In fact, Napoleon so clung to the old mercantilist craze of stimulating exports in order that they might greatly exceed the imports, as to favour the sending of agricultural produce to England, provided that such cargoes comprised manufactured goods. He allowed this privilege not only to his Empire, but also to the Kingdom of Italy.[1] The difficulty was that England would not receive the manufactured goods of her enemies; and, as corn and

[1] Letter of August 6th, 1810, to Eugène.

cheese could not be exported to England, unless a certain proportion of silk and cloths went with them, the latter were got up so as to satisfy the French customs officers and then cast into the sea. It is needless to add that this export of manufactures to England, on which Napoleon prided himself, was limited to showy but worthless articles, which were made solely *ad usum delphinorum*.

It was fortunate for us that Napoleon entertained these crude ideas on political economy; for his action opened for us a loophole of escape from a very serious difficulty. At that time our fast-growing population was barely fed by our own wheat even after good seasons; and Providence afflicted us in 1809 and 1810 with very poor harvests. In 1810 the average price was 103 shillings the quarter, the highest ever known except in 1800 and 1801; and as commerce was dislocated by the Continental System and hand-labour was being largely replaced by the new power-looms and improved spinning machinery, the outlook would have been hopeless, had not our great enemy allowed us to import continental corn. This device, which he imagined would impoverish us to enrich his own States, was the greatest aid that he could have rendered to our hard-pressed social system; and readers of Charlotte Brontë's realistic sketches of the Luddite rioting in Yorkshire may imagine what would have befallen England if, besides lack of work and low wages, there had been the added horrors of a bread famine. But fortunately the curious commercial notions harboured by our foe enabled us in the winter of 1810–11 to get supplies of corn not only from Prussia and Poland, but even from Italy and France.

In one sense this incident has been misunderstood. It has been referred to by Porter[1] and other hopeful persons as proof positive that as long as we can buy corn we shall get it, even from our enemies. It proves nothing of the sort. Napoleon's correspondence and his whole policy with regard to licences, which we shall presently examine, show clearly that he believed he would greatly benefit his own States and impoverish our people by selling us large stores of corn at a very high price. There is no

[1] "Progress of the Nation," p. 148.

hint in any of his letters that he ever framed the notion of *starving* us into surrender. All that he looked to was the draining away of our wealth by cutting off our exports, and by allowing imports to enter our harbours much as usual. As long as he prevented us selling our produce, he heeded little how much we bought from his States: in fact, the more we bought, the sooner we should be bankrupt — such was his notion.

It is strange that he never sought to cut off our corn-supplies. They were then drawn almost entirely from the Baltic ports. The United States and Canada had as yet only sent us a few driblets of corn. La Plata and the Cape of Good Hope were quite undeveloped; and our settlements in New South Wales were at that time often troubled by dearth. The plan of sealing up the corn-fields of Europe from Riga to Trieste would have been feasible, at least for a few weeks; French troops held Danzig and Stettin; Russia, Prussia, and Denmark were at his beck and call; and an imperial decree forbidding the export of corn from France and her allied States to the United Kingdom could hardly have failed to reduce us to starvation and surrender in the very critical winter of 1810–11. But that strange mental defect of clinging with ever increasing tenacity to preconceived notions led Napoleon to allow and even to favour exports of corn to us in the time of our utmost need; and Britain survived the strain.[1]

What folly, however, to refer to the action of this man of one economic idea as being likely to determine the conduct of continental statesmen in some future naval war with England. In truth, the urgency of the problem of our national food-supply in time of a great war can only be fully understood by those who have studied the Napoleonic era. England then grew nearly enough corn for her needs; her fleets swept the seas; and Napoleon's economic hobby left her foreign food-supply unhampered at

[1] So Mollien, vol. iii., p. 135: "One knows that his powerful imagination was fertile in illusions: as soon as they had seduced him, he sought with a kind of good faith to enhance their prestige, and he succeeded easily in persuading many others of what he had convinced himself. He braved business difficulties as he braved dangers in war."

the severest crisis. Yet, even so, the price of the quartern loaf rose to more than fifteenpence, and we were brought to the verge of civil war. A comparison of that time with the conditions that now prevail must yield food for reflection to all but the case-hardened optimists.

But already Napoleon was convinced that the Continental System must be secretly relaxed in special cases. Despite the fulsome addresses which some Chambers of Commerce sent up, he knew that his seaports were in the depths of distress, and that French cotton manufacturers could not hope to compete with those of Lancashire now that his own tariff had doubled the price of raw cotton and dyes in France. He therefore hit upon the curious device of allowing continental merchants to buy licences for the privilege of secretly evading his own decrees. The English Government seems to have been the first to issue similar secret permits; but Napoleon had scarcely signed his Berlin Decree for the blockade of England before he connived at its infraction. When sugar, coffee, and other comforts became scarce, they were secretly imported from perfidious Albion for the imperial table. The final stage was reached in July, 1810, when licences to import forbidden goods were secretly sold to favoured merchants, and many officials — among them Bourrienne — reaped a rich harvest from the sale of these imperial indulgences. Merchants were so eager to evade the hated laws that they offered high prices to the treasury and *douceurs* to officials for the coveted boon; and as much as £40,000 is said to have been paid for a single licence.

On both sides of the Channel this device was abhorred, but its results were specially odious in Napoleon's States, where the burdens to be evaded were far heavier than those entailed by the Orders in Council. In fact, the Continental System was now seen to be an organized hypocrisy, which, in order to ruin the mistress of the seas, exposed the peoples to burdens more grievous than those borne by England, and left all but the wealthiest merchants a prey to a grinding fiscal tyranny. And the sting of it all was its social injustice; for while the poor were severely punished, sometimes with death, for smug-

gling sugar or tobacco, Napoleon and the favoured few who could buy licences often imported these articles in large quantities. What wonder, then, that Russia and Sweden should decline long to endure these gratuitous hardships, and should seek to evade the behests of the imperial smuggler of the Tuileries!

Nevertheless, as no inventive people can ever be thrown wholly on its own resources without deriving some benefit, we find that France met the crisis with the cheery patience and unflagging ingenuity which she has ever evinced. In a great Empire which embraced all the lands between Hamburg, Bayonne, and Rome, not to mention Illyria and Dalmatia, a great variety of products might readily reward the inventor and the husbandman. Tobacco, rice, and cotton could be reared in the southern portions. Valiant efforts were also made to get Asiatic produce overland, so as to disappoint the English cruisers; and the coffee of Arabia was taxed very lightly, so as to ruin the American producer. When the fragrant berry became more and more scarce, chicory was discovered by good patriots to be a palatable substitute, and scientific men sought to induce their neighbours to use the isatis plant for the same purpose. Prizes were offered by the State and by local Chambers of Commerce to those who should make up for the lack of tropical goods and dyes.

In one case a noteworthy discovery was made, namely, that sugar could be extracted from beet-root, a piece of news which delighted the Emperor. He also hoped that a chemical substitute for indigo had been found, and exclaimed to a doleful deputation of merchants, who came to the Tuileries in the early summer of 1811, that chemistry would soon revolutionize commerce as completely as the discovery of the compass had done. Besides, the French Empire was the richest country in the world, and could almost do without foreign commerce, at least until England had given way; and that would soon come to pass; for the pressure of events would soon compel London merchants to throw their sugar and indigo into the Thames.[1]

[1] Miot de Melito, vol. ii., ch. xv. For some favourable symptoms in French industry, see Lumbroso, pp. 165–226, and Chaptal, p. 287. They have been credited to the Continental System; but surely they resulted from the internal free trade and intelligent administration which France had enjoyed since the Revolution.

In reality, he placed commerce far behind agriculture, which he considered to be the basis of a nation's wealth and a nation's health. But he also took a keen interest in manufactures. The silk industry at Lyons found in him a generous patron. He ordered that the best scientific training should there be given, so as to improve the processes of manufacture ; and, as silk of nearly all kinds could be produced in France and Italy, Lyons was comparatively prosperous. When, however, it suffered from the general rise of prices and from the impaired buying power of the community, he adopted heroic remedies. He ordered that all ships leaving France should carry silk fabrics equal in value to one-fourth of the whole freight ; but whether these stuffs went to adorn women or mermaids seems an open question. Or again, on the advice of Chaptal, the Emperor made large purchases of surplus stocks of Lyons silk, Rouen cottons, and Ste. Antoine furniture, so as to prevent an imminent collapse of credit and a recrudescence of Jacobinism in those industrial centres ; for as he said : "I fear a rising brought about by want of bread : I had rather fight an army of 200,000 men than that." [1]

In the main, this policy of giving *panem et circenses* was successful in France ; at least, it kept her quiet. The national feeling ran strongly in favour of commercial prohibition. In 1787 Arthur Young found the cotton-workers of the north furious at the recent inroads of Lancashire cottons, while the wine-growers of the Garonne were equally favourable to the enlightened Anglo-French commercial treaty of 1786. It was Napoleon's lot to win the favour of the rigid protectionists, while not alienating that of the men of the Gironde, who saw in him the champion of agrarian liberty against the feudal nobles. Moreover, the nation still cherished the pathetic belief that the war was due to Albion's perfidy respecting Malta, and burned with a desire to chastise the recreant islanders. For these reasons, Frenchmen endured the drain of men and money with but little show of grumbling.

They were tired of the wars. *We have had enough glory*, they said, even in the capital itself, and an acute German

[1] "Nap. Corresp.," May 8th, 1811.

observer describes the feeling there as curiously mixed. Parisian gaiety often found vent in lampoons against the Emperor; and much satire at his expense might with safety be indulged in among a crowd, provided it were seasoned with wit. The people seemed not to fear Napoleon, as he was feared in Germany: the old revolutionary party was still active and might easily become far more dangerous than the royalist coteries of the Boulevard St. Germain. For the rest, they were all so accustomed to political change that they looked on his government as provisional, and put up with him only as long as the army triumphed abroad and he could make his power felt at home. Such was the impression of Paris gained by Varnhagen von Ense. Public opinion in the provinces seems to have been more favourable to Napoleon; and, on the whole, pride in the army and in the vigorous administration which that nation loves, above all, hatred of England and the hope of wresting from her the world's empire, led the French silently to endure rigorous press laws, increased taxes, war prices, licences, and chicory.

For Germans the hardships were much greater and the alleviations far less. They had no deep interest in Malta or in the dominion of the seas; and political economy was then only beginning to dawn on the Teutonic mind. The general trend of German thought had inclined towards the *Everlasting Nay*, until Napoleon flashed across its ken. For a time he won the admiration of the chief thinkers of Germany by brushing away the feudal cobwebs from her fair face. He seemed about to call her sons to a life of public activity; and in the famous soliloquy of Faust, in which he feels his way from word to thought, from thought to might, and from might to action, we may discern the literary projection of the influence exerted by the new Charlemagne on that nation of dreamers.[1] But the promise was fulfilled only in the most harshly practical way, namely, by cutting off all supplies of tobacco and coffee; and when Teufelsdröckh himself, admirer though he was of the French Revolution, found that the summons for his favourite beverage — the

[1] Goethe published the first part of "Faust," *in full*, early in 1808.

"dear melancholy coffee, that begets fancies," of Lessing — produced only a muddy decoction of acorns, there was the risk of his tendencies earthwards taking a very practically revolutionary turn.

In truth, the German universities were the leaders of the national reaction against the Emperor of the West. Fichte's pleading for a truly national education had taken effect. Elementary instruction was now being organized in Prussia ; and the divorce of thought from action, which had so long sterilized German life, was ended by the foundation of the University of Berlin by Humboldt. Thus, in 1810, the year of Prussia's deepest woe, when her brave Queen died of a stricken heart, when French soldiers and *douaniers* were seizing and burning colonial wares, her thinkers came into closer touch with her men of action, with mutually helpful results. Thinkers ceased to be mere dreamers, and Prussian officials gained a wider outlook on life. The life of beneficent activity, to which Napoleon might have summoned the great majority of Germans, dawned on them from Berlin, not from Paris.

His influence was more and more oppressive. The final results of his commercial decrees on the trade of Hamburg were thus described by Perthes, a well-known writer and bookseller of that town : "Of the 422 sugar-boiling-houses, few now stood open : the printing of cottons had ceased entirely : the tobacco-dressers were driven away by the Government. The imposition of innumerable taxes, door and window, capitation and land taxes, drove the inhabitants to despair." But the same sagacious thinker was able to point the moral of it all, and prove to his friends that their present trials were due to the selfish particularism of the German States : "It was a necessity that some great power should arise in the midst of the degenerate selfishness of the times and also prove victorious, for there was nothing vigorous to oppose it. Napoleon is an historical necessity."[1]

Thus, both in the abodes of learning and in the centres of industry men were groping after a higher unity and a firmer political organization, which, after the Napoleonic

[1] Baur, "Stein und Perthes," p. 85.

deluge had swept by, was to lay the foundation of a New Germany.

To all appearances, however, Napoleon's power seemed to be more firmly established than ever in the ensuing year. On March 20th, 1811, a son was born to him. At the crisis of this event, he revealed the warmth of his family instincts. On hearing that the life of mother or infant might have to be sacrificed, he exclaimed at once, "Save the mother."[1] When the danger was past, he very considerately informed Josephine, stating, "he has my chest, my mouth, and my eyes. I trust that he will fulfil his destiny." That destiny was mapped out in the title conferred on the child, "King of Rome," which was designed to recall the title "King of the Romans," used in the Holy Roman Empire.

Napoleon resolved that the old elective dignity should now be renewed in a strictly hereditary Empire, vaster than that of Charlemagne. Paris was to be its capital, Rome its second city, and the future Emperors were always to be crowned a second time at Rome. Furthermore, lest the mediæval dispute as to the supremacy of Emperor or Pope in Rome should again vex mankind, the Papacy was virtually annexed: the status of the pontiff was defined in the most Erastian sense, imperial funds were assigned for his support, and he was bidden to maintain two palaces, "the one necessarily at Paris, the other at Rome."

It is impossible briefly to describe the various conflicts between Pius VII. and Napoleon. Though now kept in captivity by Napoleon, the Pope refused to ratify these and other ukases of his captor; and the credit which Napoleon had won by his worldly-wise Concordat was now lost by his infraction of many of its clauses and by his harsh treatment of a defenceless old man. It is true that Pius had excommunicated Napoleon; but that was for the crime of annexing the Papal States, and public opinion revolted at the spectacle of an all-powerful Emperor now consigning to captivity the man who in former years had done so much to consolidate his authority. After the disasters of the Russian campaign, he sought to come to terms with the pontiff; but even

[1] Lavalette, "Mems.," ch. xxv.

NAPOLEON BAPTIZING THE

INFANT KING OF ROME, 1811.

NAPOLEON, 1821.

ST. HELENA.

NAPOLEON, MARIE LOUISE,

AND THE KING OF ROME.

LATER NAPOLEONIC MEDALS.

From Delaroche's "Trésor de Numismatique."

then the bargain struck at Fontainebleau was so hard that his prisoner, though unnerved by ill-health, retracted the unholy compromise. Whereupon Napoleon ordered that the cardinals who advised this step should be seized and carried away from Fontainebleau. Few of Napoleon's actions were more harmful than this series of petty persecutions; and among the influences that brought about his fall, we may reckon the dignified resistance of the pontiff, whose meekness threw up in sharp relief the pride and arrogance of his captor. The Papacy stooped, but only to conquer.

For the present, everything seemed to favour the new Charlemagne. Never had the world seen embodied might like that of Napoleon's Empire; and well might he exclaim at the birth of the King of Rome, "Now begins the finest epoch of my reign." All the auguries seemed favourable. In France, the voice of opposition was all but hushed. Italians, Swiss, and even some Spaniards, helped to keep down Prussia. Dutchmen and Danes had hunted down Schill for him at Stralsund. Polish horsemen had charged up the Somosierra Pass against the Spanish guns, and did valiant service on the bloody field of Albuera. The Confederation of the Rhine could send forth 150,000 men to fight his battles. The Hapsburgs were his vassals, and only faint shadows of discord as yet clouded his relations with Alexander. One of his Marshals, Bernadotte, had been chosen to succeed to the crown of Sweden; and at the other end of Europe, it seemed that Wellington and the Spanish patriots must ultimately succumb to superior numbers.

Surely now was the time for the fulfilment of those glowing oriental designs beside which his European triumphs seemed pale. In the autumn of 1810 he sent agents carefully to inspect the strongholds of Egypt and Syria, and his consuls in the Levant were ordered to send a report every six months on the condition of the Turkish Empire.[1] Above all, he urges on the completion of dock-yards and ships of war. Vast works were pushed on at Antwerp and Cherbourg: ships and gunboats were to be built at every suitable port from the Texel to Naples and

[1] Letters of October 10th and 13th, 1810, and January 1st, 1811.

Trieste ; and as the result of these labours, the Emperor counted on having 104 ships of the line, which would cover the transports from the Mediterranean, Cherbourg, Boulogne, and the Scheldt, and threatened England with an array of 200,000 fighting men.[1]

In March, 1811, this plan was modified, possibly because, as in 1804, he found the difficulties of a descent on our coasts greater than he first imagined. He now seeks merely to weary out the English in the present year. But in the next year, or in 1813, he will send an expedition of 40,000 men from the Scheldt, as if to menace Ireland ; and, having thrown us off our guard, he will divide that force into four parts for the recovery of the French and Dutch colonies in the West Indies. He counts also on having a part of his army in Spain free for service elsewhere : it must be sent to seize Sicily or Egypt.

But this was not all. His thoughts also turn to the Cape of Good Hope. Eight thousand men are to sail from Brest to seize that point of vantage at which he had gazed so longingly in 1803. Of these plans, the recovery of Egypt evidently lay nearest to his heart. He orders the storage at Toulon of everything needful for an Egyptian expedition, along with sixty gun-vessels of light draught suitable for the navigation of the Nile or of the lakes near the coast.[2] Decrès is charged to send models of these craft ; and we may picture the eager scrutiny which they received. For the Orient was still the pole to which Napoleon's whole being responded. Turned away perforce by wars with Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Spain, it swung round towards Egypt and India on the first chance of European peace, only to be driven back by some untoward shock nearer home. In 1803 he counted on the speedy opening of a campaign on the Ganges. In 1811 he proposes that the tricolour shall once more wave on the citadel of Cairo, and threaten India from the shores of the Red Sea. But a higher will than his disposed of these events, and ordained that he should then be flung back from Russia and fight for his Empire in the plains of Saxony.

[1] Letters of September 17th, 1810. [2] Letter of March 8th, 1811.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

Two mighty and ambitious potentates never fully trust one another. Under all the shows of diplomatic affection, there remains a thick rind of reserve or fear. Especially must that be so with men who spring from a fierce untamed stock. Despite the training of Laharpe, Alexander at times showed the passions and finesse of a Boyar. And who shall say that the early Jacobinism and later culture of Napoleon was more than a veneer spread all too thinly over an Italian *condottiere* of the Renaissance age? These men were too expert at wiles really to trust to the pompous assurances of Tilsit and Erfurt. De Maistre tells us that Napoleon never partook of Alexander's repasts on the banks of the Niemen. For him Muscovite cookery was suspect.

Amidst the glories of Erfurt, Oudinot saw an incident that revealed the Czar's hidden feelings. During one of their rides, the Emperors were stopped by a dyke, which Napoleon's steed refused to take; accordingly the Marshal had to help it across; but the Czar, proud of his horsemanship, finally cleared the obstacle with a splendid bound, though at the cost of a shock which broke his sword-belt. The sword fell to the ground, and Oudinot was about to hand it to Alexander, when Napoleon quickly said: "Keep that sword and bring it to me later": then, turning to the Czar, he added: "You have no objection, Sire?" A look of surprise and distrust flashed across the Czar's features; but, resuming his easy bearing, he gave his assent. Later in the day, Napoleon sent his own sword to Alexander, and thus came off easily best from an incident which threatened at first to throw him into the shade. The affair shows the ready wit and mental superiority of the one man no less than the veiled reserve and uneasiness of the other.

At the close of 1809, Alexander confessed his inner feeling to Czartoryski. Napoleon, he said, was a man who would not scruple to use any means so long as he gained his end: his mental strength was unquestioned: in the worst troubles he was cool and collected: his fits of passion were only meant to intimidate: his every act was the result of calculation: it was absurd to say that his prodigious exertions would drive him mad: his health was splendid and was equal to any effort provided that he had eight hours' sleep every day. The impression left on the ex-Minister was that Alexander understood his ally thoroughly and *feared him greatly*.[1]

A few days later came Napoleon's request for the hand of the Czar's sister, a request which Alexander declined with many expressions of goodwill and regret. What, then, was his surprise to find that, before the final answer had been returned, Napoleon was in treaty for the hand of an Austrian Archduchess.[2] This time it was for him to feel affronted. And so this breathless search for a bride left sore feelings at both capitals, at Paris because the Czar declined Napoleon's request, at St. Petersburg because the imperial wooer was off on another scent before the first had given out.

Alexander's annoyance was increased by his ally's doubtful behaviour about Poland. After the recent increase of the Duchy of Warsaw he had urged Napoleon to make a declaration that "the Kingdom of Poland shall never be re-established." This matter was being discussed side by side with the matrimonial overtures; and, after their collapse, Napoleon finally declined to give this assurance which Alexander felt needful for checking the rising hopes of Poles and Lithuanians. The utmost the French Emperor would do was to promise, *in a secret clause*, that he would never aid any other Power or any popular movement that aimed at the re-establishment of that kingdom.[3]

[1] Czartoryski, "Mems.," vol. ii., ch. xvii. At this time he was taken back to the Czar's favour, and was bidden to hope for the re-establishment of Poland by the Czar as soon as Napoleon made a blunder.

[2] Tatischeff, p. 526; Vandal, vol. ii., ch. vii.

[3] "Corresp.," No. 16178; Vandal, vol. ii., ch. vii. The *exposé* of December 1st, 1809, had affirmed that Napoleon did not intend to re-establish Poland. But this did not satisfy Alexander.

In fact, as the Muscovite alliance was on the wane, he judged it bad policy to discourage the Poles, who might do so much for him in case of a Franco-Russian war. He soon begins to face seriously the prospect of such an event. At the close of 1810 he writes that the Russians are intrenching themselves on the Dwina and Dniester, which "shows a bad spirit."

But the great difficulty is Russia's imperfect observation of the Continental System. He begs the Czar to close his ports against English ships: 600 of them are wandering about the Baltic, after being repulsed from its southern shores, in the hope of getting into Russian harbours. Let Alexander seize their cargoes, and England, now at her last gasp, must give in. Five weeks later he returns to the charge. It is not enough to seize British ships; the hated wares get in under American, Swedish, Spanish, and Portuguese, *even under French flags*. Of the 2,000 ships that entered the Baltic in 1810, not one was really a neutral: they were all charged with English goods, with false papers and *forged certificates of origin manufactured in London*.[1] Any other unit among earth's millions would have been convinced of the futility of the whole enterprise, now that his own special devices were being turned against him. It was not enough to conquer and enchain the Continent. Every customs officer must be an expert in manufactures, groceries, documents, and the water-marks of paper, if he was to detect the new "frauds of the neutral flags."

But Napoleon knew not the word impossible — "a word that exists only in the dictionary of fools." In fact, his mind, naturally unbending, was now working more and more in self-made grooves. Of these the deepest was his commercial warfare; and he pushed on, reckless of Europe and reckless of the Czar. In the middle of December he annexed the North Sea coast of Germany, including Oldenburg. The heir to this duchy had married Alexander's sister, whose hand Napoleon had claimed at Erfurt. The duke, it is true, was offered the district of Erfurt as an indemnity; but that proposal only stung the Czar the more. The deposition of the

[1] Letters of October 23rd and December 2nd, 1810.

duke was not merely a personal affront; it was an infraction of the Treaty of Tilsit which had restored him to his duchy.

A fortnight later, when as yet he knew not of the Oldenburg incident, Alexander himself broke that treaty.[1] At the close of 1810 he declined to admit land-borne goods on the easy terms arranged at Tilsit, but levied heavy dues on them, especially on the *articles de luxe* that mostly hailed from France. Some such step was inevitable. Unable to export freely to England, Russia had not money enough to buy costly French goods without disordering the exchange and ruining her credit. While seeking to raise revenue on French manufactures, the Czar resolved to admit on easy terms all colonial goods, especially American. English goods he would shut out as heretofore; and he claimed that this new departure was well within the limits of the Treaty of Tilsit. Far different was Napoleon's view: "Here is a great planet taking a wrong direction. I do not understand its course at all."[2] Such were his first words on reading the text of the new ukase. A fatalistic tone now haunts his references to Russia's policy. On April 2nd he writes: "If Alexander does not quickly stop the impetus which has been given, he will be carried away by it next year; and thus war will take place in spite of him, *in spite of me*, in spite of the interests of France and Russia. . . . It is an operatic scene, of which the English are the shifters." What madness! As if Russia's craving for colonial wares and solvency were a device of the diabolical islanders.[3] As if his planetary simile were anything more than a claim that he was the centre of the universe and his will its guiding and controlling power.

Nevertheless, Russia held on her way. In vain did Alexander explain to his ally the economic needs of his realm, protest his fidelity to the Continental System, and beg some consideration for the Duke of Oldenburg. It

[1] Vandal, vol. ii., p. 529.

[2] Tatischeff, p. 555.

[3] Vandal, vol. ii., p. 535, admits that we had no hand in it. But the Czar naturally became more favourable to us, and at the close of 1811 secretly gave entry to our goods.

was evident that the Emperor of the West would make no real concession. In fact, the need of domination was the quintessence of his being. And Maret, Duc de Bassano, who was now his Foreign Minister, or rather, we should say, the man who wrote and signed his despatches, revealed the psychological cause of the war which cost the lives of nearly a million of men, in a note to Lauriston, the French ambassador at St. Petersburg. Napoleon, he wrote, cared little about interviews or negotiations unless the movements of his 450,000 men caused serious concern in Russia, recalled her to the Continental System as settled at Tilsit, and "brought her back to the state of inferiority in which she was then."[1]

This was, indeed, the gist of the whole question. Napoleon saw that Alexander was slipping out of the leading strings of Tilsit, and that he was likely to come off best from that bargain, which was intended to confirm the supremacy of the Western Empire. For both potentates that treaty had been, at bottom, nothing more than a truce. Napoleon saw in it a means of subjecting the Continent to his commercial code, and of preparing for a Franco-Russian partition of Turkey. The Czar hailed it as a breathing space wherein he could reorganize his army, conquer Finland, and stride towards the Balkans. The Erfurt interview prolonged the truce; for Napoleon felt the supreme need of stamping out the Spanish Rising and of postponing the partition of Turkey which his ally was eager to begin. By the close of 1811 both potentates had exhausted all the benefits likely to accrue from their alliance.[2] Napoleon flattered himself that the conquest of Spain was wellnigh assured, and that England was in her last agonies. On the other hand, Russia had recovered her military strength, had gained Finland, and planted her foot on the Lower Danube, and now sought to shuffle off Napoleon's commercial decrees. In fine, the monarch, who at Tilsit had figured as mere clay in the hands of the Corsican potter, had proved himself to be his equal both in cunning and tenacity. The seeming dupe of 1807 now promised to be the victor in statecraft.

[1] Quoted by Garden, vol. xiii., p. 171.
[2] Bernhardi's "Denkwürdigkeiten des Grafen von Toll," vol. i., p. 223.

Then there was the open sore of Poland. The challenge, on this subject, was flung down by Napoleon at a diplomatic reception on his birthday, August 15th, 1811. Addressing the Russian envoy, he exclaimed: "I am not so stupid as to think that it is Oldenburg which troubles you. I see that Poland is the question: you attribute to me designs in favour of Poland. I begin to think that you wish to seize it. No: if your army were encamped on Montmartre, I would not cede an inch of the Warsaw territory, not a village, not a windmill." His fears as to Russia's designs were far-fetched. Alexander's sounding of the Poles was a defensive measure, seriously undertaken only after Napoleon's refusal to discourage the Polish nationalists. But it suited the French Emperor to aver that the quarrel was about Poland rather than the Continental System, and the scene just described is a good specimen of his habit of cool calculation even in seemingly chance outbursts of temper. His rhapsody gained him the ardent support of the Poles, and was vague enough to cause no great alarm to Austria and Prussia.[1]

On the next day Napoleon sketched to his Ministers the general plan of campaign against Russia. The whole of the Continent was to be embattled against her. On the Hapsburg alliance he might well rely. But the conduct of Prussia gave him some concern. For a time she seemed about to risk a war *à outrance*, such as Stein, Fichte, and the staunch patriots of the Tugendbund ardently craved. Indeed, Napoleon's threats to this hapless realm seemed for a time to portend its annihilation. The King, therefore, sent Scharnhorst first to St. Petersburg and then to Vienna with secret overtures for an alliance. They were virtually refused. Prudence was in the ascendant at both capitals; and, as will presently appear, the more sagacious Prussians soon came to see that a war, in which Napoleon could be enticed into the heart of Russia, might deal a mortal blow at his overgrown Empire. Certainly it was quite impossible for Prussia to stay the French advance. A

[1] Czartoryski, vol. ii., ch. xvii. At Dresden, in May, 1812, Napoleon admitted to De Pradt, his envoy at Warsaw, that Russia's lapse from the Continental System was the chief cause of war: "Without Russia, the Continental System is an absurdity."

guerilla warfare, such as throve in Spain, must surely be crushed in her open plains; and the diffident King returned Gneisenau's plan of a rising of the Prussian people against Napoleon with the chilling comment, "Very good as poetry."

Thus, when Napoleon wound up his diplomatic threats by an imperious summons to side with him or against him, Frederick William was fain to abide by his terms, sending 20,000 troops against Russia, granting free passage to Napoleon's army, and furnishing immense supplies of food and forage, the payment of which was to be settled by some future arrangement (February, 1812). These conditions seemed to thrust Prussia down to the lowest circle of the Napoleonic Inferno; and great was the indignation of her patriots. They saw not that only by stooping before the western blast could Prussia be saved. To this topic we shall recur presently, when we treat of the Russian plan of campaign.

Sweden was less tractable than Napoleon expected. He had hoped that the deposition of his personal enemy, Gustavus IV., the enthronement of a feeble old man, Charles XIII., and the choice of Bernadotte as heir to the Swedish crown, would bring that land back to its traditional alliance with France. But, on accepting his new dignity, Bernadotte showed his customary independence of thought by refusing to promise that he would never bear arms against France — a refusal that cost him his principality of Ponte Corvo. He at once adopted a forward Scandinavian policy; and, as the Franco-Russian alliance waned, he offered Swedish succour to Napoleon if he would favour the acquisition of Norway by the Court of Stockholm.

The Emperor had himself mooted this project in 1802, but he now returned a stern refusal (February 25th, 1811), and bade Sweden enforce the Continental System under pain of the occupation of Swedish Pomerania by French troops. Even this threat failed to bend the will of Bernadotte, and the Swedes preferred to forego their troublesome German province rather than lose their foreign commerce. In the following January, Napoleon carried out his threat, thereby throwing Sweden into the arms of

Russia. By the treaty of March–April, 1812, Bernadotte gained from Alexander the prospect of acquiring Norway, in return for the aid of Sweden in the forthcoming war against Napoleon. This was the chief diplomatic success gained by Alexander; for though he came to terms with Turkey two months later (retaining Bessarabia), the treaty was ratified too late to enable him to concentrate all his forces against the Napoleonic host that was now flooding the plains of Prussia.[1]

The results of this understanding with the Court of Stockholm were seen in the Czar's note presented at Paris at the close of April. He required of Napoleon the evacuation of Swedish Pomerania by French troops and a friendly adjustment of Franco-Swedish disputes, the evacuation of Prussia by the French, the reduction of their large garrison at Danzig, and the recognition of Russia's right to trade with neutrals. If these terms were accorded by France, Alexander was ready to negotiate for an indemnity for the Duke of Oldenburg and a mitigation of the Russian customs dues on French goods.[2] The reception given by Napoleon to these reasonable terms was unpromising. "You are a gentleman," he exclaimed to Prince Kurakin, "— and yet you dare to present to me such proposals? — You are acting as Prussia did before Jena." Alexander had already given up all hope of peace. A week before that scene, he had left St. Petersburg for the army, knowing full well that Napoleon's cast-iron will might be shivered by a mighty blow, but could never be bent by diplomacy.

On his side, Napoleon sought to overawe his eastern rival by a display of imposing force. Lord of a dominion

[1] For the overtures of Russia and Sweden to us and their exorbitant requests for loans, see Mr. Hereford George's account in his careful and systematic study, "Napoleon's Invasion of Russia," ch. iv. It was not till July, 1812, that we formally made peace with Russia and Sweden, and sent them pecuniary aid. We may note here that Napoleon, in April, 1812, sent us overtures for peace, if we would acknowledge Joseph as King of Spain and Murat as King of Naples, and withdraw our troops from the Peninsula and Sicily: Napoleon would then evacuate Spain. Castlereagh at once refused an offer which would have left Napoleon free to throw his whole strength against Russia (Garden, vol. xiii., pp. 215, 254).

[2] Garden, vol. xiii., p. 329.

that far excelled that of the Czar in material resources, suzerain of seven kingdoms and thirty principalities, he called his allies and vassals about him at Dresden, and gave to the world the last vision of that imperial splendour which dazzled the imagination of men.

It was an idle display. In return for secret assurances that he might eventually regain his Illyrian provinces, the Emperor Francis had pledged himself by treaty to send 30,000 men to guard Napoleon's flank in Volhynia. But everyone at St. Petersburg knew that this aid, along with that of Prussia, was forced and hollow.[1] The example of Spain and the cautious strategy of Wellington had dissolved the spell of French invincibility; and the Czar was resolved to trust to the toughness of his people and the defensive strength of his boundless plains. The time of the Macks, the Brunswicks, the Bennigsens, was past: the day of Wellington and of truly national methods of warfare had dawned.

Yet the hosts now moving against Alexander bade fair to overwhelm the devotion of his myriad subjects and the awful solitudes of his steppes. It was as if Peter the Hermit had arisen to impel the peoples of Western and Central Europe once more against the immobile East. Frenchmen to the number of 200,000 formed the kernel of this vast body: 147,000 Germans from the Confederation of the Rhine followed the new Charlemagne: nearly 80,000 Italians under Eugène formed an Army of Observation: 60,000 Poles stepped eagerly forth to wrest their nation's liberty from the Muscovite grasp; and Illyrians, Swiss, and Dutch, along with a few Spaniards and Portuguese, swelled the Grand Army to a total of 600,000 men. Nor was this all. Austria and Prussia sent their contingents, amounting in all to 50,000 men, to guard Napoleon's flanks on the side of Volhynia and Courland. And this mighty mass, driven on by Napoleon's will, gained a momentum which was to carry its main army to Moscow.

[1] Hereford George, *op. cit.* pp. 34–37. Metternich ("Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 517, Eng. ed.) shows that Napoleon had also been holding out to Austria the hope of gaining Servia, Wallachia, and Moldavia (the latter of which were then overrun by Russian troops), if she would furnish 60,000 troops: but Metternich resisted successfully.

After reviewing his vassals at Dresden, and hurrying on the arrangements for the transport of stores, Napoleon journeyed to the banks of the Niemen. On all sides were to be seen signs of the passage of a mighty host, broken-down carts, dead horses, wrecked villages, and dense columns of troops that stripped Prussia wellnigh bare. Yet, despite these immense preparations, no hint of discouragement came from the Czar's headquarters. On arriving at the Niemen, Napoleon issued to the Grand Army a proclamation which was virtually a declaration of war. In it there occurred the fatalistic remark: "Russia is drawn on by fate: her destinies must be fulfilled." Alexander's words to his troops breathed a different spirit: "God fights against the aggressor."

Much that is highly conjectural has been written about the plans of campaigns of the two Emperors. That of Napoleon may be briefly stated: it was to find out the enemy's chief forces, divide them, or cut them from their communications, and beat them in detail. In other words, he never started with any set plan of campaign, other than the destruction of the chief opposing force. But, in the present instance, it may be questioned whether he had not sought by his exasperating provocations to drive Prussia into alliance with the Czar. In that case, Alexander would have been bound in honour to come to the aid of his ally. And if the Russians ventured across the Niemen, or the Vistula, as Napoleon at first believed they would,[1] his task would doubtless have been as easy as it proved at Friedland. Many Prussian officers, so Müffling asserts, believed that this was the aim of French diplomacy in the early autumn of 1811, and that the best reply was an unconditional surrender. On the other hand, there is the fact that St. Marsan, Napoleon's ambassador at Berlin, assured that Government, on October 29th, that his master did not wish to destroy Prussia, but laid much stress on the supplies which she could furnish him — a support that would enable the Grand Army to advance on the Niemen *like a rushing stream*.

The metaphor was strangely imprudent. It almost in-

[1] See his words to Metternich at Dresden, Metternich's "Mems.," vol. i., p. 152; as also that he would not advance beyond Smolensk in 1812.

vited Prussia to open wide her sluices and let the flood foam away on to the sandy wastes of Lithuania; and we may fancy that the more discerning minds at Berlin now saw the advantage of a policy which would entice the French into the wastes of Muscovy. It is strange that Napoleon's Syrian adage, "Never make war against a desert," did not now recur to his mind. But he gradually steeled himself to the conviction that war with Alexander was inevitable, and that the help of Austria and Prussia would enable him to beat back the Muscovite hordes into their eastern steppes. For a time he had unquestionably thought of destroying Prussia before he attacked the Czar; but he finally decided to postpone her fate until he had used her for the overthrow of Russia.[1]

After the experiences of Austerlitz and Friedland, the advantages of a defensive campaign could not escape the notice of the Czar. As early as October, 1811, when Scharnhorst was at St. Petersburg, he discussed these questions with him; and not all that officer's pleading for the cause of Prussian independence induced Alexander to offer armed help unless the French committed a wanton aggression on Königsberg. Seeing that there was no hope of bringing the Russians far to the west, Scharnhorst seems finally to have counselled a Fabian strategy for the ensuing war; and, when at Vienna, he drew up a memoir in this sense for the guidance of the Czar.[2]

Alexander was certainly much in need of sound guidance. Though Scharnhorst had pointed out the way of salvation, a strategic tempter was soon at hand in the person of Gen-

[1] Bernhardi's "Toll," vol. i., p. 226; Stern, "Abhandlungen," pp. 350–366; Müffling, "Aus meinem Leben"; L'Abbé de Pradt, "L'histoire de l'Ambassade de Varsovie."

[2] "Erinnerungen des Gen. von Boyen," vol. ii., p. 254. This, and other facts that will later be set forth, explode the story foisted by the Prussian General von dem Knesebeck in his old age on Müffling. Knesebeck declared that his mission early in 1812 to the Czar, which was to persuade him to a peaceful compromise with Napoleon, was directly controverted by the secret instructions which he bore from Frederick William to Alexander. He described several midnight interviews with the Czar at the Winter Palace, in which he convinced him that by war with Napoleon, and by enticing him into the heart of Russia, Europe would be saved. Lehmann has shown ("Knesebeck und Schön") that this story is contradicted by all the documentary evidence. It may be dismissed as the offspring of senile vanity.

eral von Phull, an uncompromising theorist who planned campaigns with an unquestioning devotion to abstract principles. Untaught by the catastrophes of the past, Alexander once more let his enthusiasm for theories and principles lead him to the brink of the abyss. Phull captivated him by setting forth the true plan of a defensive campaign which he had evolved from patient study of the Seven Years' War. Everything depended on the proper selection of defensive positions and the due disposition of the defending armies. There must be two armies of defence, and at least one great intrenched camp. One army must oppose the invader on a line near, or leading up to, the camp ; while the other army must manœuvre on his rear or flanks. And the camp must be so placed as to stretch its protecting influence over one, or more, important roads. It need not be on any one of them : in fact, it was better that it should be some distance away ; for it thus fulfilled better the all-important function of a "flanking position."

Such a position Phull had discovered at Drissa in a curve of the river Dwina. It was sufficiently far from the roads leading from the Niemen to St. Petersburg and to Moscow efficiently to protect them both. There, accordingly, he suggested that vast earthworks should be prepared ; for there, at that artificial Torres Vedras, Russia's chief force might await the Grand Army, while the other force harassed its flank or rear.[1]

Napoleon had not probed this absurdity to its inmost depths : but he early found out that the Russians were in two widely separated armies ; and this sufficed to decide his movements and the early part of the campaign. Having learnt that one army was near Vilna, and the other in front of the marshes of the Pripet, he sought to hold them apart by a rapid irruption into the intervening space, and thereafter to destroy them piecemeal. Never was a visionary theory threatened by a more terrible realism. For Napoleon at midsummer was mustering a third of a million of men on the banks of the Niemen,

[1] "Toll," vol. i., pp. 256 *et seq.* Müffling was assured by Phull in 1819 that the Drissa plan was only part of a grander design which had never had a fair chance!

while the Russians, with little more than half those numbers as yet available for the fighting-line, had them spread out over an immense space, so as to facilitate those flanking operations on which Phull set such store.[1]

On the morn of June 23rd, three immense French columns wound their way to the pontoon bridges hastily thrown over the Niemen near Kovno; and loud shouts of triumph greeted the great leader as the vanguard set foot on Lithuanian soil. No Russians were seen except a few light horsemen, who galloped up, inquired of the engineers why they were building the bridges, and then rode hastily away. During three days the Grand Army filed over the river and melted away into the sandy wastes. No foe at first contested their march, but neither were they met by the crowds of downtrodden natives whom their fancy pictured as thronging to welcome the liberators. In truth, the peasants of Lithuania had no very close racial affinity to the Poles, whose offshoots were found chiefly among the nobles and the wealthier townsfolk. Solitude, the sultry heat of a Russian midsummer, and drenching thunderstorms depressed the spirits of the invaders. The miserable cart tracks were at once cut up by the passage of the host, and 10,000 horses perished of fatigue or of disease caused by the rank grass, in the fifty miles' march from the Niemen to Vilna.

The difficulties of the transport service began at once, and they were to increase with every day's march. With his usual foresight, Napoleon had ordered the collection of immense stores of all kinds at Danzig, his chief base of supplies. Two million pairs of boots were required for the wear and tear of a long campaign, and all preparations were on the same colossal scale. In this connection it is noteworthy that no small proportion of the cloaks and boots came from England, as the industrial resources of the Continent were wholly unequal to supplying the crusaders of the Continental System.

[1] Bernhardi's "Toll" (vol. i., p. 231) gives Barclay's chief "army of the west" as really mustering only 127,000 strong, along with 9,000 Cossacks; Bagration, with the second "army of the west," numbered at first only 35,000, with 4,000 Cossacks; while Tormasov's corps observing Galicia was about as strong. Clausewitz gives rather higher estimates.

A great part of those stores never reached the troops in Russia. The wherries sent from Danzig to the Niemen were often snapped up by British cruisers, and the carriage of stores from the Niemen entailed so frightful a waste of horseflesh that only the most absolute necessaries could keep pace with the army in its rapid advance. The men were thus left without food except such as marauding could extort. In this art Napoleon's troops were experts. Many miles of country were scoured on either side of the line of march, and the Emperor, on reaching Vilna, had to order Ney to send out cavalry patrols to gather in the stragglers, who were committing "horrible devastations" and would "fall into the hands of the Cossacks."

At Vilna the Grand Army met with a more cheering reception than heretofore. Deftly placing his Polish regiments in front and chasing the retiring Russians beyond the town, Napoleon then returned to find a welcome in the old Lithuanian capital. The old men came forth clad in the national garb, and it seemed that that province, once a part of the great Polish monarchy, would break away from the empire of the Czars and extend Napoleon's influence to within a few miles of Smolensk.[1] The newly-formed Diet at Warsaw also favoured this project: it constituted itself into a general confederation, declared the Kingdom of Poland to be restored, and sent a deputation to Napoleon at Vilna begging him to utter the creative words: "Let the Kingdom of Poland exist." The Emperor gave a guarded answer. He declared that he loved the Poles, he commended them for their patriotism, which was "the first duty of civilized man," but added that only by a unanimous effort could they now compel their enemies to recognize their rights; and that, having guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian Empire, he could not sanction any movement which would disturb its remaining Polish provinces. This diplomatic reply chilled his auditors. But what would have been their feelings had they known that the calling of the Diet at Warsaw, and the tone of its address to Napoleon, had all been sketched out five weeks before by the imperial stage manager himself? Yet such was the case.

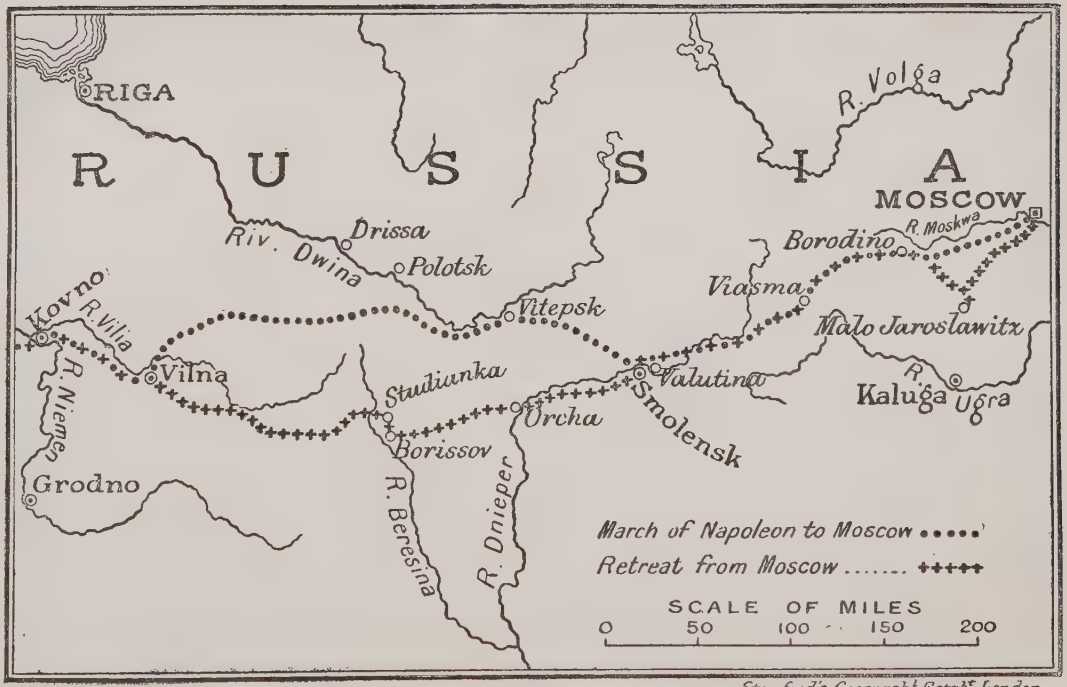
[1] Labaume, "Narrative of 1812," and Ségur.

The scene-shifter was the Abbé de Pradt, Archbishop of Malines, whom Napoleon sent as ambassador to Warsaw, with elaborate instructions as to the summoning of the Diet, the whipping-up of Polish enthusiasm, the revolutionizing of Russian Poland, and the style of the address to him. Nay, his passion for the regulation of details even led him to inform the ambassador that the imperial reply would be one of praise of Polish patriotism and of warning that Polish liberty could only be won by their "zeal and their efforts." The trickery was like that which he had played upon the Poles shortly before Eylau. In effect, he said now, as then: "Pour out your blood for me first, and I will do something for you." But on this occasion the scenic setting was more impressive, the rush of the Poles to arms more ardent, the diplomatic reply more astutely postponed, and the finale more awful.[1]

Still, the Poles marched on; but their devotion became more questioning. The feelings of the Lithuanians were also ruffled by Napoleon's reply to the Polish deputies: nor were they consoled by his appointment of seven magnates to regulate the affairs of the districts of Lithuania, under the ægis of French commissioners, who proved to be the real governors. Worst of all was the marauding of Napoleon's troops, who, after their long habituation to the imperial maxim that "war must support war," could not now see the need of enduring the pangs of hunger in order that Lithuanian enthusiasm might not cool.

Meanwhile the war had not progressed altogether as he desired. His aim had been to conceal his advance across the Niemen, to surprise the two chief Russian armies while far separated, and thus to end the war on Lithuanian soil by a blow such as he had dealt at Friedland. The Russian arrangements seemed to favour his plan. Their two chief arrays, that led by the Czar and by General Barclay de Tolly, some 125,000 strong north of Vilna, and

[1] See the long letter of May 28th, 1812, to De Pradt; also the Duc de Broglie's "Memoirs" (vol. i., ch. iv.) for the hollowness of Napoleon's Polish policy. Bignon, "Souvenirs d'un Diplomate" (ch. xx.), errs in saying that Napoleon charged De Pradt — "Tout agiter, tout enflammer." At St. Helena, Napoleon said to Montholon ("Captivity," vol. iii., ch. iii.): "Poland and its resources were but poetry in the first months of the year 1812."



Stanford's Geograph! Estab.t, London.

that of Prince Bagration mustering now about 45,000 effectives, in the province of Volhynia, were labouring to carry out the strategy devised by Phull. The former was directly to oppose the march of Napoleon's main army, while the smaller Russian force was to operate on its flanks and rear. Such a plan could only have succeeded in the good old times when war was conducted according to ceremonious etiquette ; it courted destruction from Napoleon. At Vilna the Emperor directed the movements that were to ensnare Bagration. Already he had urged on the march of Davoust, who was to circle round from the north, and the advance of Jerome Bonaparte's Westphalians, who were bidden to hurry on eastwards from the town of Grodno on the Upper Niemen. Their convergence would drive Bagration into the almost trackless marshes of the Pripet, whence his force would emerge, if at all, as helpless units.

Such was Napoleon's plan, and it would have succeeded but for a miscalculation in the time needed for Jerome's march. Napoleon underrated the difficulties of his advance or else overrated his brother's military capacity. The King of Westphalia was delayed a few days at Grodno by bad weather and other difficulties ; thus Bagration, who had been ordered by the Czar to retire, was able to escape the meshes closing around him by a speedy retreat to Bobruisk, whence he moved northwards. Napoleon was enraged at this loss of a priceless opportunity, and addressed vehement reproaches to Jerome for his slowness and "small-mindedness." The youngest of the Bonapartes resented this rebuke which ignored the difficulties besetting a rapid advance. The prospect of being subjected to that prince of martinets, Davoust, chafed his pride ; and, throwing up his command, he forthwith returned to the pleasures of Cassel.

By great good fortune, Bagration's force had escaped from the snares strewn in its path by the strategy of Phull and the counter-moves of Napoleon. The fickle goddess also favoured the rescue of the chief Russian army from imminent peril at Drissa. In pursuance of Phull's scheme, the Czar and Barclay de Tolly fell back with that army towards the intrenched camp on the Dwina. But doubts

had already begun to haunt their minds as to the wisdom of Phull's plans. In fact, the bias of Barclay's nature was towards the proven and the practical. He came of a Scottish family which long ago had settled in Livonia, and had won prosperity and esteem in the trade of Riga. His ancestry and his early surroundings therefore disposed him to the careful weighing of evidence and distrust of vague theories. His thoroughness in military organization during the war in Finland and his unquestioned probity and open-mindedness, had recently brought him high into favour with the Czar, who made him War Minister. He had no wide acquaintance with the science of warfare, and has been judged altogether deficient in a wide outlook on events and in those masterly conceptions which mark the great warrior.[1] But nations are sometimes ruined by lofty genius, while at times they may be saved by humdrum prudence; and Barclay's common sense had no small share in saving Russia.

Two months before the Grand Army passed the Niemen, he had expressed the hope that God would send retreat to the Russian armies; and we may safely attribute to his influence with the Czar the timely order to Bagration to desist from flanking tactics and beat a retreat while yet there was time. That portion of Phull's strategy having signally failed, Alexander naturally became more suspicious about the Drissa plan; and during the retirement from Vilna, he ordered a survey of the works to be made by Phull's adjutant, a young German named Clausewitz, who was destined to win a name as an authority in strategy. This officer was unable conscientiously to present a cheering report. He found the camp deficient in many respects. Nevertheless, Alexander still clung to the hope of checking the French advance before these great intrenchments.

On his arrival there, on July 8th, this hope also was dashed. Michaud, a young Sardinian engineer, pointed out several serious defects in their construction. Barclay also protested against shutting up a large part of the defending army in a camp which could easily be blockaded by Napoleon's vast forces. Finally, as the Russian re-

[1] "Toll," vol. i., p. 239; Wilson, "Invasion of Russia," p. 384.

serves stationed there proved to be disappointingly weak both in numbers and efficiency, the Czar determined to evacuate the camp, intrust the sole command to Barclay, and retire to his northern capital. It is said that, before he left the army, the Grand Duke Constantine, a friend of of the French cause, made a last effort to induce him to come to terms with Napoleon, now that the plan of campaign had failed. If so, Alexander repelled the attempt. Pride as a ruler and a just resentment against Napoleon prevented any compromise ; and probably he now saw that safety for himself and ruin for his foe lay in the firm adoption of that Fabian policy of retreat and delay, which Scharnhorst had advocated and Barclay was now determined to carry out.

Though still hampered by the intrigues of Constantine, Bennigsen, and other generals, who hated him as a foreigner and feigned to despise him as a coward, Barclay at once took the step which he had long felt to be necessary ; he ordered a retreat which would bring him into touch with Bagration. Accordingly, leaving Wittgenstein with 25,000 men to hold Oudinot's corps in check on the middle Dwina, he marched eastwards towards Vitepsk. True, he left St. Petersburg open to attack ; but it was not likely that Napoleon, when the summer was far spent, would press so far north and forego his usual plan of striking at the enemy's chief forces. He would certainly seek to hinder the junction of the two Russian armies, as soon as he saw that this was Barclay's aim. Such proved to be the case. Napoleon soon penetrated his design, and strove to frustrate it by a rapid move from Vilna towards Polotsk on Barclay's flank, but he failed to cut into his line of march, and once more had to pursue.

Despite the heavy shrinkage in the Grand Army caused by a remorseless rush through a country wellnigh stripped of supplies, the Emperor sought to force on a general engagement. He hoped to catch Barclay at Vitepsk. "The whole Russian army is at Vitepsk — we are on the eve of great events," he writes on July 25th. But the Russians skilfully withdrew by night from their position in front of that town, which he entered on July 28th. Chagrined and perplexed, the chief stays a fortnight to organize sup-

plies and stores, while his vanguard presses on to envelop the Russians at Smolensk. Again his hopes revive when he hears that Barclay and Bagration are about to join near that city. In fact, those leaders there concluded that strategic movement to the rear which was absolutely necessary if they were not to be overwhelmed singly. They viewed the retreat in a very different light. To the cautious Barclay it portended a triumph long deferred, but sure: while the more impulsive Muscovite looked upon the constant falling back as a national disgrace.

The feelings of the soldiery also forbade a spiritless abandonment of the holy city of the Upper Dnieper that stands as sentinel to Russia Proper. On these feelings Napoleon counted, and rightly. He was now in no haste to strike: the blow must be crushing and final. At last he hears that Davoust, the leader whose devotion and methodical persistence merit his complete trust, has bridged the River Dnieper below the city, and has built ovens for supplying the host with bread. And, having now drawn up troops and supplies from the rear, he pushes on to end the campaign.

Barclay was still for retreat; but religious sentiment and patriotism bade the defenders stand firm behind those crumbling walls, while Bagration secured the line of retreat. The French, ranged around on the low hills which ring it on the south, looked for an easy triumph, and Napoleon seems to have felt an excess of confidence. At any rate, his dispositions were far from masterly. He made no serious effort to threaten the Russian communications with Moscow, nor did he wait for his artillery to overwhelm the ramparts and their defenders. The corps of Ney, Davoust, and Poniatowski, with Murat's cavalry and the Imperial Guard posted in reserve, promised an easy victory, and the dense columns of foot moved eagerly to the assault. They were received with a terrific fire. Only after three hours' desperate fighting did they master the southern suburbs, and at nightfall the walls still defied their assaults. Yet in the meantime Napoleon's cannon had done their work. The wooden houses were everywhere on fire; a speedy retreat alone could save the garrison from ruin; and amidst a whirlwind of flame and

smoke Barclay drew off his men to join Bagration on the road to Moscow (August 17th).

Once more, then, the Russian army had slipped from Napoleon's grasp, though this time it dealt him a loss of 12,000 in killed or wounded. And the momentous question faced him whether he should halt, now that summer was on the wane, or snatch under the walls of Moscow the triumph which Vilna, Vitepsk, and Smolensk had promised and denied. It is stated by that melodramatic narrator, Count Philip Ségur, that on entering Vitepsk, the Emperor exclaimed: "The campaign of 1812 is ended, that of 1813 will do the rest." But the whole of Napoleon's "Correspondence" refutes the anecdote. Besides, it was not Napoleon's habit to go into winter quarters in July, or to rest before he had defeated the enemy's main army.[1]

At Smolensk the question wore another aspect. Napoleon told Metternich at Dresden that he would not in the present year advance beyond Smolensk, but would organize Lithuania during winter and advance again in the spring of 1813, adding: "My enterprise is one of those of which the solution is to be found in patience." A policy of masterly inactivity certainly commended itself to his Marshals. But the desire to crush the enemy's rear drew Ney and Murat into a sharp affair at Valutino or Lubino: the French lost heavily, but finally gained the position: and the hope

[1] We may here also clear aside the statements of some writers who aver that Napoleon intended to strike at St. Petersburg. Perhaps he did so for a time. On July 9th he wrote at Vilna that he proposed to march *both on Moscow and St. Petersburg*. But that was while he still hoped that Davoust would entrap Bagration, and while Barclay's retreat on Drissa seemed likely to carry the war into the north. Napoleon always aimed first at the enemy's army; and Barclay's retreat from Drissa to Vitepsk, and thence to Smolensk, finally decided Napoleon's move towards Moscow. If he had any preconceived scheme — and he always regulated his moves by events rather than by a cast-iron plan — it was to strike at Moscow. At Dresden he said to De Pradt: "I must finish the war by the end of September. . . . I am going to Moscow: one or two battles will settle the business. I will burn Tula, and Russia will be at my feet. Moscow is the heart of that Empire. I will wage war with Polish blood." De Pradt's evidence is not wholly to be trusted; but I am convinced that Napoleon never seriously thought of taking 200,000 men to the barren tracts of North Russia late in the summer, while the English, Swedish, and Russian fleets were ready to worry his flank and stop supplies.

that the foe were determined to fight the decisive battle at Dorogobuzh lured Napoleon on, despite his earlier decision.[1] Besides, his position seemed less hazardous than it was before Austerlitz. The Grand Army was decidedly superior to the united forces of Barclay and Bagration. On the Dwina, Oudinot held the Russians at bay; and when he was wounded, his successor, Gouvion St. Cyr, displayed a tactical skill which enabled him easily to foil a mere fighter like Wittgenstein. On the French right flank, affairs were less promising; for the ending of the Russo-Turkish war now left the Russian army of the Pruth free to march into Volhynia. But, for the present, Napoleon was able to summon up strong reserves under Victor, and assure his rear.

With full confidence, then, he pressed onwards to wrest from Fortune one last favour. It was granted to him at Borodino. There the Russians made a determined stand. National jealousy of Barclay, inflamed by his protracted retreat, had at last led to his being superseded by Kutusoff; and, having about 110,000 troops, the old fighting general now turned fiercely to bay. His position on the low convex curve of hills that rise behind the village of Borodino was of great strength. On his right was the winding valley of the Kolotza, an affluent of the Moskwa, and before his centre and left the ground sloped down to a stream. On this more exposed side the Russians had hastily thrown up earthworks, that at the centre being known as the Great Redoubt, though it had no rear defences.

Napoleon halted for two days, until his gathering forces mustered some 125,000 men, and he now prepared to end the war at a blow. After surveying the Russian position, he saw Kutusoff's error in widely extending his lines to the north; and while making feints on that side, so as to prevent any concentration of the Muscovite array, he planned to overwhelm the more exposed centre and left, by the assaults of Davoust and Poniatowski on the south, and of Ney's corps and Eugène's Italians on the

[1] Letter of August 24th to Maret; so too Labaume's "Narrative," and Garden, vol. xiii., p. 418. Mr. George thinks that Napoleon decided on August 21st to strike at Moscow on grounds of general policy.

redoubts at the centre. Davoust begged to be allowed to outflank the Russian left; but Napoleon refused, perhaps owing to a fear that the Russians might retreat early in the day, and decided on dealing direct blows at the left and centre. As the 7th of September dawned with all the splendour of a protracted summer, cannon began to thunder against the serried arrays ranged along the opposing slopes, and Napoleon's columns moved against the redoubts and woods that sheltered the Muscovite lines. The defence was most obstinate. Time after time the smaller redoubts were taken and retaken; and while, on the French right centre, the tide of battle surged up and down the slope, the Great Redoubt dealt havoc among Eugène's Italians, who bravely but, as it seemed, hopelessly struggled up that fatal rise.

Then was seen a soul-stirring sight. Of a sudden, a mass of Cuirassiers rushed forth from the invaders' ranks, flung itself uphill, and girdled the grim earthwork with a stream of flashing steel. There, for a brief space, it was stayed by the tough Muscovite lines, until another billow of horsemen, marshalled by Grouchy and Chastel, swept all before it, took the redoubt on its weak reverse, and overwhelmed its devoted defenders.[1] In vain did the Russian cavalry seek to save the day: Murat's horsemen were not to be denied, and Kutusoff was at last fain to draw back his mangled lines, but slowly and defiantly, under cover of a crushing artillery fire.

Thus ended the bloodiest fight of the century. For several hours 800 cannon had dealt death among the opposing masses; the Russians lost about 40,000 men, and, whatever Napoleon said in his bulletins, the rents in his array were probably nearly as great. He has been censured for not launching his Guard at the wavering foe at the climax of the fight; and the soldiery loudly blamed its commander, Bessières, for dissuading his master from this step. But to have sacrificed those veterans to Russian cannon would have been a perilous act.[2] His Guard

[1] Labaume, "Narrative"; Lejeune's "Mems.," vol. ii., ch. vi.

[2] Marbot's "Mems." Bausset, a devoted servant to Napoleon, refutes the oft-told story that he was ill at Borodino. He had nothing worse than a bad cold. It is curious that such stories are told about Napoleon after

was the solid kernel of his army: on it he could always rely, even when French regulars dissolved, as often happened after long marches, into bands of unruly marauders; and its value was to be found out during the retreat. More fitly may Napoleon be blamed for not seeking earlier in the day to turn the Russian left, and roll that long line up on the river. Here, as at Smolensk, he resorted to a frontal attack, which could only yield success at a frightful cost. The day brought little glory to the generals, except to Ney, Murat, and Grouchy. For his valour in the *mêlée*, Ney received the title of Prince de la Moskwa.

A week before this Pyrrhic triumph, Napoleon had heard of a terrible reverse to French arms in Spain. His old friend, Marmont, who had won the Marshal's bâton after Wagram, measured his strength with Wellington in the plains of Leon with brilliant success until a false move near Salamanca exposed him to a crushing rejoinder, and sent his army flying back towards Burgos. Madrid was now uncovered and was occupied for a time by the English army (August 13th). Thus while Napoleon was gasping at Moscow, his brother was expelled from Madrid, until the recall of Soult from Andalusia gave the French a superiority in the centre of Spain which forced Wellington to retire to Ciudad Rodrigo. He lost the fruits of his victory, save that Andalusia was freed: but he saved his army for the triumphant campaign of 1813. Had Napoleon shown the like prudence by beating a timely retreat from Moscow, who can say that the next hard-fought fights in Silesia and Saxony would not have once more crowned his veterans with decisive triumph?

As it was, the Grand Army toiled on through heat, dust, and the smoke of burning villages, to gain peace and plenty at Moscow. But when, on September the 14th, the conqueror entered that city with his vanguard, solitude reigned almost unbroken. A few fanatics, clinging to the tradition that the Kremlin was impregnable, idly sought to defend it; but troops, officials, nobles, merchants, and the great mass of the people were gone, and

every battle when his genius did not shine. In this case, it rests on the frothy narrative of Ségur, and is out of harmony with those of Gourgaud and Pelet. Clausewitz justifies Napoleon's caution in withholding his Guard.

the military stores had been burnt or removed. Rostopchin, the governor, had released the prisoners and broken the fire engines. Flames speedily burst forth, and Bausset, the Prefect of Napoleon's Palace, affirms that while looking forth from the Kremlin he saw the flames burst forth in several districts in quick succession; and that a careful examination of cellars often proved them to be stored with combustibles, vitriol in one case being swallowed by a French soldier who took it for brandy! If all this be true, it proves that the Muscovites were determined to fire their capital. But their writers have as stoutly affirmed that the fires were caused by French and Polish plunderers.[1] Three days later, the powers of the air and the demons of drink and frenzy raged uncontrolled; and Napoleon himself barely escaped from the whirlwinds of flame that enveloped the Kremlin and nearly scorched to death the last members of his staff. For several hours the conflagration was fanned by an equinoctial gale, and when, on the 20th, it died down, convicts or plunderers kindled it anew.

Yet the army did not want for shelter, and, as Sergeant Bourgogne remarks, if every house had been gutted there were still the caves and cellars that promised protection from the cold of winter. The real problem was now, as ever, the food-supply. The Russians had swept the district wellnigh bare; and though the Grand Army feasted for a fortnight on dainties and drink, yet bread, flour, and meat were soon very scarce. In vain did the Emperor seek to entice the inhabitants back; they knew the habits of the invaders only too well; and despite several distant raids, which sometimes cost the French dear, the soldiery began to suffer.

October wore on with delusive radiance, but brought no peace. Soon after the great conflagration at Moscow, Napoleon sent secret and alluring overtures to Alexander, offering to leave Russia a free hand in regard to Turkey, inclusive of Constantinople, which he had hitherto strictly reserved, and hinting that Polish affairs might also be

[1] Bausset, "Cour de Napoléon." Tolstoi ("War and Liberty") asserts that the fires were the work of tipsy pillagers. So too Arndt, "Mems.," p. 204. Dr. Tzenoff, in a scholarly monograph (Berlin, 1900), comes to the same conclusion. Lejeune and Bourgogne admit both causes.

arranged to the Czar's liking.[1] But Alexander refused tamely to accept the fruits of victory from the man who, he believed, had burnt holy Moscow, and clung to his vow never to treat with his rival as long as a single French soldier stood on Russian soil. His resolve saved Europe. Yet it cost him much to defy the great conqueror to the death: he had so far feared the capture of St. Petersburg as to request that the Cronstadt fleet might be kept in safety in England.[2] But gradually he came to see that the sacrifice of Moscow had saved his empire and lured Napoleon to his doom. Kutusoff also played a waiting game. Affecting a wish for peace, he was about secretly to meet Napoleon's envoy, Lauriston, when the Russian generals and our commissioner, Sir R. Wilson, intervened, and required that it should be a public step. It seems likely, however, that Kutusoff was only seeking to entrap the French into barren negotiations; he knew that an answer could not come from the banks of the Neva until winter began to steal over the northern steppes.

Slowly the truth begins to dawn on Napoleon that Moscow is not *the heart of Russia*, as he had asserted to De Pradt that it was. Gradually he sees that that primitive organism had no heart, that its almost amorphous life was widespread through myriads of village communes, vegetating apart from Moscow or Petersburg, and that his march to the old capital was little more than a sword-slash through a pond.[3] Had he set himself to study with his former care the real nature of the hostile organism, he would certainly never have ventured beyond Smolensk in the present year. But he had now merged the thinker in the conqueror, and — sure sign of coming disaster — his mind no longer accurately gauged facts, it recast them in its own mould.

By long manipulation of men and events, it had framed a dogma of personal infallibility. This vice had of late been

[1] Garden, vol. xiii., p. 452; vol. xiv., pp. 17–19.

[2] Cathcart, p. 41; see too the Czar's letters in Sir Byam Martin's "Despatches," vol. ii., p. 311. This fact shows the frothiness of the talk indulged in by Russians in 1807 as to "our rapacity and perfidy" in seizing the Danish fleet.

[3] *E.g.*, the migration of Rostopchin's serfs *en masse* from their village, near Moscow, rather than come under French dominion (Wilson, "French Invasion of Russia," p. 179).

growing on him apace. It was apparent even in trifles. The Countess Metternich describes how, early in 1810, he persisted in saying that Kaunitz was her brother, in spite of her frequent disclaimers of that honour; and, somewhat earlier, Marmont noticed with half-amused dismay that when the Emperor gave a wrong estimate of the numbers of a certain corps, no correction had the slightest effect on him; his mind always reverted to the first figure. In weightier matters this peculiarity was equally noticeable. His clinging to preconceived notions, however unfair or burdensome they were to Britain, Prussia, or Austria, had been the underlying cause of his wars with those Powers. And now this same defect, burnt into his being by the blaze of a hundred victories, held him to Moscow for five weeks, in the belief that Russia was stricken unto death, and that the facile Czar whom he had known at Tilsit would once more bend the knee. An idle hope. "I have learnt to know him now," said the Czar; "Napoleon or I; I or Napoleon; we cannot reign side by side." Buoyed up by religious faith and by his people's heroism, Alexander silently defied the victor of Moscow and rebuked Kutusoff for receiving the French envoy.

At last, on October 18th, the Russians threw away the scabbard and surprised Murat's force some forty miles south of Moscow, inflicting a loss of 3,000 men. But already, a day or two earlier, Napoleon had realized the futility of his hope of peace and had resolved to retreat. The only alternative was to winter at Moscow, and he judged that the state of French and Spanish affairs rendered such a course perilous. He therefore informed Maret that the Grand Army would go into winter quarters between the Dnieper and the Dwina.[1]

There is no hint in his letters that he anticipated a disastrous retreat. The weather hitherto had been "as fine as that at Fontainebleau in September," and he purposed retiring by a more southerly route which had not been

[1] Letter of October 16th; see too his undated notes ("Corresp.," No. 19237). Bausset and many others thought the best plan would be to winter at Moscow. He also says that the Emperor's favourite book while at Moscow was Voltaire's "History of Charles XII."

exhausted by war. Full of confidence, then, he set out on the 19th, with 115,000 men, persuaded that he would easily reach friendly Lithuania and his winter quarters "before severe cold set in." The veil was rudely torn from his eyes when, south of Malo-Jaroslavitz, his Marshals found the Russians so strongly posted that any further attack seemed to be an act of folly. Eugène's corps had suffered cruelly in an obstinate fight in and around that town, and the advice of Berthier, Murat, and Bessières was against its renewal. For an hour or more the Emperor sat silently gazing at a map. The only prudent course now left was to retreat north and then west by way of Borodino, *over his devastated line of advance.*[1] Back, then, towards Borodino the army mournfully trudged (October 26th):

"Everywhere (says Labaume) we saw wagons abandoned for want of horses to draw them. Those who bore along with them the spoils of Moscow trembled for their riches; but we were disquieted most of all at seeing the deplorable state of our cavalry. The villages which had but lately given us shelter were level with the ground: under their ashes were the bodies of hundreds of soldiers and peasants. . . . But most horrible was the field of Borodino, where we saw the forty thousand men, who had perished there, yet lying unburied."

For a time, Kutusoff forbore to attack the sore-stricken host; but, early in November, the Russian horse began to infest the line of march, and at Viasma their gathering forces were barely held off: had Kutusoff aided his lieutenants, he might have decimated his famished foes.

Hitherto the weather had been singularly mild and open, so much so that the superstitious peasants looked on it as a sign that God was favouring Napoleon. But, at last, on November the 6th, the first storm of winter fell on the straggling array, and completed its miseries. The icy blasts struck death to the hearts of the feeble; and the puny fighting of man against man was now merged in the awful struggle against the powers of the air. Drifts of snow blotted out the landscape; the wandering columns often lost the road and thousands forthwith ended their miseries. Except among the Old Guard all semblance of

[1] Lejeune, vol. ii., chap. vi. As it chanced, Kutusoff had resolved on retreat if Napoleon attacked him. This is perhaps the only time when Napoleon erred through excess of prudence. Fezensac noted at Moscow that he would not see or hear the truth.

military order was now lost, and battalions melted away into groups of marauders.

The search for food and fuel became furious, even when the rigour of the cold abated. The behaviour of Bourgogne, a sergeant in the Imperial Guard, may serve to show by what shifts a hardy masterful nature fought its way through the wreckage of humanity around: "If I could meet anybody in the world with a loaf, I would make him give me half — nay, I would kill him so as to get the whole." These were his feelings: he acted on them by foraging in the forest and seizing a pot in which an orderly was secretly cooking potatoes for his general. Bourgogne made off with the potatoes, devoured most of them half-boiled, returned to his comrades and told them he had found nothing. Taking his place near their fire, he scooped out his bed in the snow, lay under his bearskin, and clasped his now precious knapsack, while the others moaned with hunger. Yet, as his narrative shows, he was not naturally a heartless man: in such a situation man is apt to sink to the level of the wolf. The best food obtainable was horseflesh, and hungry throngs rushed at every horse that fell, disputing its carcass with the packs of dogs or wolves that hung about the line of march.[1]

Smolensk was now the thought dearest to every heart; and, buoyed with the hope of rest and food, the army tottered westwards as it had panted eastwards through the fierce summer heats with Moscow as its cynosure. The hope that clung about Smolensk was but a cruel mirage. The wreck of that city offered poor shelter; the stores were exhausted by the vanguard; and, to the horror of

[1] It has been constantly stated by Napoleon, and by most French historians of this campaign, that his losses were mainly due to an exceptionally severe and early winter. The statement will not bear examination. Sharp cold usually sets in before November 6th in Russia at latitude 55°; the severe weather which he then suffered was succeeded by alternate thaws and slighter frosts until the beginning of December, when intense cold is always expected. Moreover, the bulk of the losses occurred before the first snowstorm. The Grand Army which marched on Smolensk and Moscow may be estimated at 400,000 (including reinforcements). At Viasma, *before severe cold set in*, it had dwindled to 55,000. We may note here the curious fact, substantiated by Alison, that the French troops stood the cold better than the Poles and North Germans. See too N. Senior's "Conversations," vol. i., p. 239.

Eugène's Italians, men swarmed out of that fancied abode of plenty and pounced on every horse that stumbled to its doom on the slippery banks of the Dnieper. With inconceivable folly, Napoleon, or his staff, had provided no means for roughing the horses' shoes. The Cossacks, when they knew this, exclaimed to Wilson: "God has made Napoleon forget that there was a winter here."

Disasters now thickened about the Grand Army. During his halt at Smolensk (November 9th–14th), Napoleon heard that Victor's force on the Dwina had been worsted by the Russians, and there was ground for fearing that the Muscovite army of the Ukraine would cut into the line of retreat. The halt at Smolensk also gave time for Kutusoff to come up parallel with the main force, and had he pressed on with ordinary speed and showed a tithe of his wonted pugnacity, he might have captured the Grand Army and its leader. As it was, his feeble attack on the rearguard at Krasnoe only gave Ney an opportunity of showing his dauntless courage. The "bravest of the brave" fought his way through clouds of Cossacks, crossed the Dnieper, though with the loss of all his guns, and rejoined the main body. Napoleon was greatly relieved on hearing of the escape of this Launcelot of the Imperial chivalry. He ordered cannon to be fired at suitable intervals so as to forward the news if it were propitious; and on hearing their distant boomings, he exclaimed to his officers: "I have more than 400,000,000 francs in the cellars of the Tuileries, and would gladly have given the whole for the ransom of my faithful companion in arms."[1]

Far greater was the danger at the River Beresina. The Russian army of the south had seized the bridge at Borisoff on which Napoleon's safety depended, and Oudinot vainly struggled to wrest it back. The Muscovites burnt it under his eyes. Such was the news which Napoleon heard at Bobr on November 24th. It staggered him; for, with his usual excess of confidence, he had destroyed his pontoons on the banks of the Dnieper; and now there was no means of crossing a river, usually insignificant, but swollen by floods and bridged only by half-thawed ice. Yet French resource was far from vanquished. General Corbineau,

[1] Bausset, "Cour de Napoléon"; Wilson, pp. 271–277.

MARSHAL NEY IN THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.

From a painting by Yvon at Versailles.

finding from some peasants that the river was fordable three leagues above Borisoff, brought the news to Oudinot, who forthwith prepared to cross there. Napoleon, coming up on the 26th, approved the plan, and cheeringly said to his Marshal, "Well, you shall be my locksmith and open that passage for me."[1]

To deceive the foe, the Emperor told off a regiment or two southwards with a long tail of camp-followers that were taken to be an army. And this wily move, harmonizing with recent demonstrations of the Austrians on the side of Minsk, convinced the Muscovite leader that Napoleon was minded to clasp hands with them.[2] While the Russians patrolled the river on the south, French sappers were working, often neck deep in the water, to throw two light bridges across the stream higher up. By heroic toil, which to most of them brought death, the bridges were speedily finished, and, as the light of November 26th was waning, Oudinot's corps of 7,000 men gained a firm footing on the homeward side. But they were observed by Russian scouts, and when on the next day Napoleon and other corps had struggled across, the enemy came up, captured a whole division, and on the morrow strove to hurl the invaders into the river. Victor and the rearguard staunchly kept them at bay; but, as night drew on, the Russian army of the Dwina came up and swept the bridges and their approaches with artillery fire.

Then the panic-stricken throngs of wounded and stragglers, women and camp-followers, writhed and fought their way until the frail planks were piled high with living and dead. To add to the horrors, one bridge gave way under the weight of the cannon. The rush for the one remaining bridge became yet more frantic and the night passed amidst scenes of unspeakable woe. Stout swimmers threw themselves into the stream, only to fall victims to the ice floes and the numbing cold. At dawn of the 29th, the French rearguard fired the bridge to cover the retreat. Then a last, loud wail of horror arose from the farther bank, and despair or a loathing of life drove many to end their miseries in the river or in the flames.

Such was the crossing of the Beresina. The ghastly

[1] Oudinot, "Mémoires." [2] Hereford George, pp. 349–350.

tale was told once more with renewed horrors when the floods of winter abated and laid bare some 12,000 corpses along the course of that fatal stream. It would seem that if Napoleon, or his staff, had hurried on the camp-followers to cross on the night of the 28th to the 29th, those awful scenes would not have happened, for on that night the bridges *were not used at all.* Grosser carelessness than this cannot be conceived ; and yet, even after this shocking blunder, the devotion of the soldiers to their chief found touching expression. When he was suffering from cold in the wretched bivouac west of the river, officers went round calling for dry wood for his fire ; and shivering men were seen to offer precious sticks, with the words, "Take it for the Emperor." [1]

On that day Napoleon wrote to Maret that possibly he would leave the army and hurry on to Paris. His presence there was certainly needed, if his crown was to be saved. On November 6th, the day of the first snowstorm, he heard of the Quixotic attempt of a French republican, General Malet, to overthrow the Government at Paris. With a handful of followers, but armed with a false report of Napoleon's capture in Russia, this man had apprehended several officials, until the scheme collapsed of sheer inanity.[2] "How now, if we were at Moscow," exclaimed the Emperor, on hearing this curious news ; and he saw with chagrin that some of his generals merely shrugged their shoulders. After crossing the Beresina, he might hope that the worst was over, and that the stores at Vilna and Kovno would suffice for the remnant of his army. The cold for a time had been less rigorous. The behaviour of Prussia and Austria was, in truth, more important than the conduct of the retreat. Unless those Powers were kept to their troth, not a Frenchman would cross the Elbe.

At Smorgoni, then, on December the 5th, he informed his Marshals that he left them in order to raise 300,000 men ; and, intrusting the command to Murat, he hurried away. His great care was to prevent the extent of the disaster being speedily known. "Remove all strangers from Vilna," he wrote to Maret: "the army is not fine to

[1] Bourgogne, ch. viii. [2] Pasquier, vol. ii., *ad init.*

look upon just now." The precaution was much needed. Frost set in once more, and now with unending grip. Vilna offered a poor haven of refuge. The stores were soon plundered, and, as the Cossacks drew near, Murat and the remnant of the Grand Army decamped in pitiable panic. Amidst ever deepening misery they struggled on, until, of the 600,000 men who had proudly crossed the Niemen for the conquest of Russia, only 20,000 famished, frost-bitten, unarmed spectres staggered across the bridge of Kovno in the middle of December. The auxiliary corps furnished by Austria and Prussia fell back almost unscathed. But the remainder of that mighty host rotted away in Russian prisons or lay at rest under Nature's winding sheet of snow.[1]

[1] Colonel Desprez, who accompanied the retreat, thus described to King Joseph its closing scenes: "The truth is best expressed by saying that *the army is dead.* The Young Guard was 8,000 strong when we left Moscow: at Vilna it scarcely numbered 400. . . . The corps of Victor and Oudinot numbered 30,000 men when they crossed the Beresina: two days afterwards they had melted away like the rest of the army. Sending reinforcements only increased the losses."

The following French official report, a copy of which I have found in our F. O. Records (Russia, No. 84), shows how frightful were the losses after Smolensk. But it should be noted that the rank and file in this case numbered only 300 at Smolensk, and had therefore lost more than half their numbers — and this in a regiment of the Guard.

GARDE IMPÉRIALE: 6ME RÉGIMENT DE TIRAILLEURS

1*ère Division. Situation à l'époque du* 19 *Décembre,* 1812

Présent sous les armes au départ de Smolensk.		Perte depuis le départ de Smolensk.										Reste présents sous les armes.	
		Restés sur le champ de bataille.		Blessés qui n'ont pu suivre, restés au pouvoir de l'ennemi.		Morts de froid ou de misère.		Restés en arrière, gelés, ou pour cause de maladie, au pouvoir de l'ennemi.		Total des Pertes.			
Off.	Tr.	Off.	Tr.	Off.	Tr.	Off.	Tr.	Off.	Tr.	Off.	Tr.	Off.	Tr.
31	300	—	13	4	52	—	24	13	201	17	290	14	10

Signé le Colonel Major Commandant le dit Regiment, CARRÉ.

Les autres régiments sont plus ou moins dans le même état.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FIRST SAXON CAMPAIGN

DESPITE the loss of the most splendid army ever marshalled by man, Napoleon abated no whit of his resolve to dominate Germany and dictate terms to Russia. At Warsaw, in his retreat, he informed De Pradt that there was but one step from the sublime *to the ridiculous*, that is, from the advance on Moscow to the retreat. At Dresden he called on his allies, Austria and Prussia, to repel the Russians ; and at Paris he strained every nerve to call the youth of the Empire to arms. The summons met with a ready response : he had but to stamp his foot when the news from East Prussia looked ominous, and an array of 350,000 conscripts was promised by the Senate (January 10th).

In truth, his genius had enthralled the mind of France. The magnificence of his aims, his hitherto triumphant energy, and the glamour of his European supremacy had called forth all the faculties of the French and Italian peoples, and set them pulsating with ecstatic activity. He knew by instinct all the intricacies of their being, which his genius controlled with the easy decisiveness of a master-key. The rude shock of the Russian disaster served but to emphasize the thoroughness of his domination, and the dumb trustfulness of his forty-three millions of subjects.

And yet their patience might well have been exhausted. His military needs had long ago drawn in levies the year before they were legally liable ; but the mighty swirl of the Moscow campaign now sucked 150,000 lads of under twenty years of age into the devouring vortex. In the Dutch and German provinces of his Empire the number of those who evaded the clutches of the conscription was very large. In fact, the number of "refractory con-

scripts" in the whole realm amounted to 40,000. Large bands of them ranged the woods of Brittany and La Vendée, until mobile columns were sent to sweep them into the barracks.

But in nearly the whole of France (Proper), Napoleon's name was still an unfailing talisman, appealing as it did to the two strongest instincts of the Celt, the clinging to the soil and the passion for heroic enterprise. Thus it came about that the peasantry gave up their sons to be "food for cannon" with the same docility that was shown by soldiers who sank death-stricken into a snowy bed with no word of reproach to the author of their miseries. A like obsequiousness was shown by the officials and legislators of France, who meekly listened to the Emperor's reproaches for their weakness in the Malet affair, and heard with mild surprise his denunciation against republican idealogy — *the cloudy metaphysics to which all the misfortunes of our fair France may be attributed.* No tongue dared to utter the retort which must have fermented in every brain.[1]

But his explanations and appeals did not satisfy every Frenchman. Many were appalled at the frightful drain on the nation's strength. They asked in private how the deficit of 1812 and the further expenses of 1813 were to be met, even if he allotted the communal domains to the service of the State. They pointed to allies ruined or lost; to Spain, where Joseph's throne still tottered from the shock of Salamanca; to Poland, lying mangled at the feet of the Muscovites; to Italy, desolated by the loss of her bravest sons; to the Confederation of the Rhine, equally afflicted and less resigned; to Austria and Prussia, where timid sovereigns and calculating Courts alone kept the peoples true to the hated French alliance. Only by a change of system, they averred, could the hatred of Europe be appeased, and the formation of a new and vaster Coalition avoided. Let Napoleon cease to force his

[1] "Corresp.," December 20th, 1812. For the so-called Concordat of 1813, concluded with the captive Pius VII. at Fontainebleau, see "Corresp." of January 25th, 1813. The Pope repudiated it at the first opportunity. Napoleon wanted him to settle at Avignon as a docile subject of the Empire.

methods of commercial warfare on the Continent: let him make peace on honourable terms with Russia, where the chief Minister, Romantzoff, was ready to meet him half-way: let him withdraw his garrisons from Prussian fortresses, soothe the susceptibilities of Austria — and events would tend to a solid and honourable peace.

To all promptings of prudence Napoleon was deaf. His instincts and his experience of the Kings prevented him yielding on any important point. He determined to carry on the war from the Tagus to the Vistula, to bolster up Joseph in Spain, to keep his garrisons fast rooted in every fortress as far east as Danzig. Russia and Prussia, he said, had more need of peace than France. If he began by giving up towns, they would demand kingdoms, whereas by yielding nothing he would intimidate them. And if they did form a league, their forces would be thinly spread out over an immense space; he would easily dispose of their armies when they were not aided by the climate; and a single victory would undo the clumsy knot (*ce nœud mal assorti*).[1]

In truth, if he left Spain out of his count, the survey of the military position was in many ways reassuring. England's power was enfeebled by the declaration of war by the United States. In Central Europe his position was still commanding. He held nearly all the fortresses of Prussia, and though he had lost a great army, that loss was spread out very largely over Poles, Germans, Italians, and smaller peoples. Many of the best French troops and all his ablest generals had survived. His Guard could therefore be formed again, and the brains of his army were also intact. The war had brought to light no military genius among the Russians; and all his past experience of the "old coalition machines" warranted the belief that their rusty cogwheels, even if oiled by English subsidies, would clank slowly along and break down at the first exceptional strain. Such had been the case at Marengo, at Austerlitz, at Friedland. Why should not history repeat itself?

[1] Mollien, vol. iii., *ad fin.* For his vague offers to mitigate the harsh terms of Tilsit for Prussia, and to grant her a political existence if she would fight for him, see Hardenberg, "Mems.," vol. iv., p. 350.

While he was guiding his steps solely by the light of past experience, events were occurring that heralded the dawn of a new era for Central Europe. On the 30th of December, the Prussian General Yorck, who led the Prussian corps serving previously under Macdonald in Courland, concluded the Convention of Tauroggen with the Russians, stipulating that this corps should hold the district around Memel and Tilsit as neutral territory, until Frederick William's decision should be known. Strictly considered, this convention was a grave breach of international law and an act of treachery towards Napoleon. The King at first viewed it in that light; but to all his subjects it seemed a noble and patriotic action. To continue the war with Russia for the benefit of Napoleon would have been an act of political suicide.

Yet, for some weeks, Frederick William waited on events; and these events decided for war, not against Russia, but against France. The Prussian Chancellor, Hardenberg, did his best to hoodwink the French at Berlin, and quietly to play into the hands of the ardent German patriots. After publishing an official rebuke to Yorck, he secretly sent Major Thile to reassure him. He did more: in order to rescue the King from French influence, still paramount at Berlin, he persuaded him to set out for Breslau, on the pretext of raising there another contingent for service under Napoleon. The ruse completely succeeded: it deceived the French ambassador, St. Marsan: it fooled even Napoleon himself. With his now invariable habit of taking for granted that events would march according to his word of command, the Emperor assumed that this was for the raising of the corps of 30,000 men which he had requested Frederick William to provide, and said to Prince Hatzfeld (January 29th): "Your King is going to Breslau: I think it a timely step." Such was Napoleon's frame of mind, even after he heard of Yorck's convention with the Russians. That event he considered "the worst occurrence that could happen." Yet neither that nor the patriotic ferment in Prussia reft the veil from his eyes. He still believed that the Prussians would follow their King, and that the King would obey him. On February the 3rd he wrote to

Maret, complaining that 2,000 Prussian horsemen were shutting themselves up in Silesian towns, "as if they were afraid of us, instead of helping us and covering their country."

Once away from Berlin, Frederick William found himself launched on a resistless stream of national enthusiasm. At heart he was no less a patriot than the most ardent of the university students; but he knew far better than they the awful risks of war with the French Empire. His little kingdom of 4,700,000 souls, with but half-a-dozen strongholds it could call its own, a realm ravaged by Napoleon's troops alike in war and peace until commerce and credit were but a dim memory — such a land could ill afford to defy an empire ten times as populous and more than ten times as powerful. True, the Russians were pouring in under the guise of friendship; but the bitter memories of Tilsit forbade any implicit trust in Alexander. And, if the dross had been burnt out of his nature by a year of fiery trial, could his army, exhausted by that frightful winter campaign and decimated by the diseases which Napoleon's ghastly array scattered broadcast in its flight, ever hope, even with the help of Prussia's young levies, to cope with the united forces of Napoleon and Austria?

For at present it seemed that the Court of Vienna would hold fast to the French alliance. There Metternich was all-powerful, and the keystone of his system was a guarded but profit-seeking subservience to Napoleon. Not that the Emperor Francis and he loved the French potentate; but they looked on him now as a pillar of order, as a barrier against Jacobinism in France, against the ominous pan-Germanism preached by Prussian enthusiasts, and against Muscovite aggrandizement in Turkey and Poland. Great was their concern, first at the Russo-Turkish peace which installed the Muscovites at the northern mouth of the Danube, and still more at the conquering swoops of the Russian eagle on Warsaw and Posen. How could they now hope to gain from Turkey the set-off to the loss of Tyrol and Illyria on which they had recently been counting, and how save any of the Polish lands from the grip of Russia? For the present

Russia was more to be feared than Napoleon. Her influence seemed the more threatening to the policy of balance on which the fortunes of the Hapsburgs were delicately poised.

Only by degrees were these fears and jealousies laid to rest. It needed all the address of a British envoy, Lord Walpole, who repaired secretly to Vienna and held out the promise of tempting gains, to assuage these alarms, and turn Austria's gaze once more on her lost provinces, Tyrol, Illyria, and Venetia. For the present, however, nothing came of these overtures; and when the French discovered Walpole's presence at Vienna, Metternich begged him to leave.[1]

For the present, then, Austria assumed a neutral attitude. A truce was concluded with Russia, and a special envoy was sent to Paris to explain the desire of the Emperor Francis to act as mediator, with a view to the conclusion of a general peace. The latest researches into Austrian policy show that the Kaiser desired an honourable peace for all parties concerned, and that Metternich may have shared his views. But, early in the negotiations, Napoleon showed flashes of distrust as to the sincerity of his father-in-law, and Austria gradually changed her attitude. The change was to be fatal to Napoleon. But the question whether it was brought about by Napoleon's obstinacy, or Metternich's perfidy, or the force of circumstances, must be postponed for the present, while we consider events of equal importance and of greater interest.

While Austria balanced and Frederick William negotiated, the sterner minds of North Germany rushed in on the once sacred ground of diplomacy and statecraft. The struggle against Napoleon was prepared for by the exile Stein, and war was first proclaimed by a professor.

Among the many influences that urged on the Czar to

[1] Walpole reports (December 19th and 22nd, 1812) Metternich's envy of the Russian successes and of their occupation of the left bank of the Danube. Walpole said he believed Alexander would grant Austria a set-off against this; but Metternich seemed entirely Bonapartist ("F. O.," Russia, No. 84). See too the full account, based on documentary evidence, in Luckwaldt's "Oesterreich und die Anfänge des Befreiungskrieges" (Berlin, 1898).

a war for the liberation of Prussia and Europe, not the least was that wielded at his Court in the latter half of 1812 by the staunch German patriot, Stein. His heroic spirit never quailed, even in the darkest hour of Prussia's humiliation; and he now pointed out convincingly that the only sure means of overthrowing Napoleon was to raise Germany against him. To remain on a tame defensive at Warsaw would be to court another French invasion in 1813. The safety of Russia called for a pursuit of the French beyond the Elbe and a rally of the Germans against the man they detested. The appeal struck home. It revived Alexander's longings for the liberation of Europe, which he had buried at Tilsit; and it agreed with the promptings of an ambitious statecraft. Only by overthrowing Napoleon's supremacy in Germany could the Czar gain a free hand for a lasting settlement of the Polish Question. The eastern turn given to his policy in 1807 was at an end — but not before Russia had taken another step towards the Bosphorus. With one leg planted at the mouth of the Danube, the Colossus now prepared to stride over Central Europe. The aims of Catherine II. in 1792 were at last to be realized. While Europe was wrestling with Revolutionary France, the Muscovite grasp was to tighten on Poland. It is not surprising that Alexander, on January 13th, commented on the "brilliance of the present situation," or that he decided to press onward. He gave little heed to the Gallophil counsels of Romantzoff or the dolorous warnings of the German-hating Kutusoff; and, on January 18th, he empowered Stein provisionally to administer in his name the districts of Prussia (Proper) when occupied by Russian troops.

So irregular a proceeding could only be excused by dire necessity and by success. It was more than excused; it was triumphantly justified. Four days later Stein arrived at Königsberg, in company with the patriotic poet, Arndt. The Estates, or Provincial Assemblies, of East and West Prussia were summoned, and they heartily voted supplies for forming a Landwehr or militia, as well as a last line of defence called the Landsturm. This step, unique in the history of Prussia, was taken apart from,

almost in defiance of, the royal sanction : it was, in fact, due to the masterful will of Stein, who saw that a great popular impulse, and it alone, could overcome the inertia of King and officials. That impulse he himself originated, and by virtue of powers conferred on him by the Emperor Alexander. And the ball thus set rolling at Königsberg was to gather mass and momentum until, thanks to the powerful aid of Wellington in the South, it overthrew Napoleon at Paris.

The action of the exile was furthered by the word of a thinker and seer. A worthy professor at the University of Breslau, named Steffens, had long been meditating on some means of helping his country. The arrival of Frederick William had kindled a flame of devotion which perplexed that modest and rather pedantic ruler. But he so far responded to it as to allow Hardenberg to issue (February 3rd) an appeal for volunteers to "reinforce the ranks of the old defenders of the country." The appeal was entirely vague : it did not specify whether they would serve against the nominal enemy, Russia, or the real enemy, Napoleon. Pondering this weighty question, as did all good patriots, Steffens heard, in the watches of the night, the voice of conscience declare : "Thou must declare war against Napoleon." At his early morning lecture on Physics, which was very thinly attended, he told the students that he would address them at eleven on the call for volunteers. That lecture was thronged ; and to the sea of eager faces Steffens spoke forth the thought that simmered in every brain, the burning desire for *war with Napoleon*. He offered himself as a recruit : 200 students from Breslau and 258 from the University of Berlin soon flocked to the colours, and that, too, chiefly from the classes which of yore had detested the army. Thanks to the teachings of Fichte and the still deeper lessons of adversity, the mind of Germany was now ranged on the side of national independence and against an omnivorous imperialism.

Where the mind led the body followed, yet still somewhat haltingly. In truth the King and his officials were in a difficult position. They distrusted the Russians, who seemed chiefly eager to force Frederick William into war

with France and to arrange the question of a frontier afterwards. But the eastern frontier was a question of life and death for Prussia. If Alexander kept the whole of the great Duchy of Warsaw, the Hohenzollern States would be threatened from the east as grievously as ever they were on the west by the French at Magdeburg. And the Czar seemed resolved to keep the whole of Poland. He told the Prussian envoy, Knesebeck, that, while handing over to Frederick William the whole of Saxony, Russia must retain all the Polish lands, a resolve which would have planted the Russian standards almost on the banks of the Oder. Nay, more : Knesebeck detected among the Russian officials a strong, though as yet but half expressed, longing for the whole of Prussia east of the lower Vistula.

For his part, Frederick William cherished lofty hopes. He knew that the Russian troops had suffered horribly from privations and disease, that as yet they mustered only forty thousand effectives on the Polish borders, and that they urgently needed the help of Prussia. He therefore claimed that, if he joined Russia in a war against Napoleon, he must recover the whole of what had been Prussian Poland, with the exception of the district of Bialystock ceded at Tilsit.[1] It seemed, then, that the Polish Question would once more exert on the European concert that dissolving influence which had weakened the Central Powers ever since the days of Valmy. Had Napoleon now sent to Breslau a subtle schemer like Savary, the apple of discord might have been thrown in with fatal results. But the fortunes of his Empire then rested on a Piedmontese nobleman, St. Marsan, who showed a singular credulity as to Prussia's subservience. He accepted all Hardenberg's explanations (including a thin official reproof to Steffens), and did little or nothing to countermine the diplomatic approaches of Russia. The ground being thus left clear, it was possible for the Czar to speak straight to the heart of Frederick William. This he now did. Knesebeck was set aside ; and Alexander, meeting the Prussian demands half-way, promised in a treaty, signed at Kalisch on February 27th, to leave Prussia all her present territories, and to secure for her the equiva-

[1] Hardenberg, " Mems.," vol. iv., p. 366.

lent, in a "statistical, financial, and geographical sense," of the lands which she had lost since 1806, along with a territory adapted to connect Prussia Proper with the province of Silesia.[1]

It seems certain that Stein's influence weighed much with Alexander in this final compromise, which postponed the irritating question of the eastern frontier and bent all the energies of two great States to the War of Liberation. Stein was sent to Frederick William at Breslau; but the King hardly deigned to see him, and the greatest of German patriots was suffered to remain in a garret of that city during a wearisome attack of fever. But he lived through disease and official neglect as he triumphed over Slavonic intrigues; and he had at hand that salve of many an able man — the knowledge that, even while he himself was slighted, his plans were adopted with beneficent and far-reaching results.

The Russo-Prussian alliance was firmly upheld by Lord Cathcart, the British ambassador to Russia, who reached headquarters on March the 2nd. For the present, Great Britain did not definitely join the allies; but the discussions on the Hanoverian Question, which had previously sundered us from Prussia, soon proved that wisdom had been learnt in the school of adversity. The Hohenzollerns now renounced all claims to Hanover, though they showed some repugnance to our Prince-Regent's demand that the Electorate should receive some territorial gain.

Thus the two questions on which Napoleon had counted as certain to clog the wheels of the Coalition, as they had done in the past, were removed, and the way was cleared for a compact firmer than any which Europe had hitherto known. On March 17th a Russo-Prussian Convention was concluded at Breslau whereby those Powers agreed to deliver Germany from France, to dissolve the Confederation of the Rhine, and to summon the German princes and people to help them; every prince that refused would suffer the loss of his States; and arrangements were made for the provisional administration of the lands which the allies should occupy. Frederick William also appealed to his

[1] Oncken, "Oesterreich und Preussen," vol. ii.; Garden, vol. xiv., p. 167; Seeley's "Stein," vol. ii., ch. iii.

people and to his army, and instituted that coveted order of merit, the Iron Cross.

But there was small need of appeals and decorations. The people rushed to arms with an ardour that rivalled the *levée en masse* of France in 1793. Nobles and students, professors and peasants, poets and merchants, shouldered their muskets. Housewives and maidens brought their scanty savings or their treasured trinkets as offerings for the altar of the Fatherland. One incident deserves special notice. A girl, Nanny by name, whose ringlets were her only wealth, shore them off, sold them, and brought the price of them, two thalers, for the sacred cause. A noble impulse thrilled through Germany. Volunteers came from far, many of whom were to ride with Lützow's irregular horse in his wild ventures. Most noteworthy of these was the gifted young poet, Körner, a Saxon by birth, who now forsook a life of ease, radiant with poetic promise, at the careless city of Vienna, to follow the Prussian eagle. "A great time calls for great hearts," he wrote to his father: "am I to write vaudevilles when I feel within me the courage and strength for joining the actors on the stage of real life?" Alas! for him the end was to be swift and tragic. Not long after inditing an ode to his sword, he fell in a skirmish near Hamburg.

Germany mourned his loss; but she mourned still more that her greatest poet, Goethe, felt no throb of national enthusiasm. The great Olympian was too much wrapped up in his lofty speculations to spare much sympathy for struggling mortals below: "Shake your chains, if you will: the man (Napoleon) is too strong for you: you will not break them." Such was his unprophetic utterance at Dresden to the elder Körner. Men who touched the people's pulse had no such doubts. "Ah! those were noble times," wrote Arndt: "the fresh young hope of life and honour sang in all hearts; it echoed along every street; it rolled majestically down every chancel." The sight of Germans thronging from all parts into Silesia to fight for their Prussian champions awakened in him the vision of a United Germany, which took form in the song, "What is the German's Fatherland?"[1]

[1] Arndt, "Wanderungen"; Steffens, "Was ich erlebte."

Against this ever-rising tide of national enthusiasm Napoleon pitted the resources which Gallic devotion still yielded up to his demands. They were surprisingly great. In less than half a year, after the loss of half a million of men, a new army nearly as numerous was marshalled under the imperial eagles. Thirty thousand tried troops were brought from Spain, thereby greatly relieving the pressure on Wellington. Italy and the garrison towns of the Empire sent forth a vast number. But the majority were young, untrained troops; and it was remarked that the conscripts born in the years of the Terror, 1793–4, had not the stamina of the earlier levies. Brave they were, superbly brave; and the Emperor sought by every means to breathe into them his own indomitable spirit. One of them has described how, on handing them their colours, he made a brief speech; and, at the close, rising in his stirrups and stretching forth his hand, he shot at them the question: "'You swear to guard them?' I felt, as we all felt, that he snatched from our very navel the cry, 'Yes, we swear.'" Truly, the Emperor could make boys heroes, but he could never repair the losses of 1812. Guns he possessed to the number of a thousand in his arsenals; but he lacked the thousands of skilled artillerymen: youths he could find and horses he could buy: but not for many a month had he the resistless streams of horsemen that poured over Prussia after Jena, or swept into the Great Redoubt at Borodino. Nevertheless, the energy which embattled a new host within five months of a seemingly overwhelming disaster, must be considered the most extraordinary event of an age fertile in marvels. "The imagination sinks back confounded," says Pasquier, "when one thinks of all the work to be done and the resources of all kinds to be found, in order to raise, clothe, and equip such an army in so short a time."

While immersed in this prodigious task, the Emperor heard, with some surprise but with no dismay, the news of Prussia's armaments and disaffection. At first he treats it as a passing freak which will vanish with firm treatment. "Remain at Berlin as long as you can," he writes to Eugène, March 5th. "Make examples for the sake of discipline. At the least insult, whether from a

village or a town, were it from Berlin itself, burn it down." The chief thing that still concerns him is the vagueness of Eugène's reports, which leave him no option but to get news about his troops in Germany from *the English newspapers*. "Do not forget," he writes again on March 14th, "that Prussia has only four millions of people. She never in her most prosperous times had more than 150,000 troops. She will not have more than 40,000 now." That, indeed, was the number to which he had limited her after Tilsit; and he was unable to conceive that Scharnhorst's plan of passing men into a reserve would send triple that force into the field.[1] As for the Russians, he writes, they are thinned by disease, and must spread out widely in order to besiege the many fortresses between the Vistula and the Elbe. Indeed, he assures his ally, the King of Bavaria, that it will be good policy to let them advance: "The farther they advance, the more certain is their ruin." Sixty thousand troops are being led by Bertrand from Italy into Bavaria.[2] These, along with the corps of Eugène and Davoust, will crush the Russian columns. And, while the allies were busy in Saxony, Napoleon proposed to mass a great force under the shelter of the Harz Mountains, cross the Elbe near Havelberg, make a rush for the relief of Stettin, and stretch a hand to the large French force beleaguered at Danzig.

Such was his first plan. It was upset by the rapidity of the Cossacks and the general uprising of Prussia. Augereau's corps was driven from Berlin by a force of Cossacks led by Tettenborn; and this daring free lance, a native of Hamburg, thereupon made a dash for the liberation of his city. For the time he was completely successful: the fury of the citizens against the French *douaniers* gave the Cossacks and patriots an easy triumph there and throughout Hanover. This news caused Napoleon grave concern. The loss of the great Hanse Town

[1] At this time she had only 61,500 men ready for the fighting line; but she had 28,000 in garrison and 32,000 in Pomerania and Prussia (Proper), according to Scharnhorst's report contained in "F. O.," Russia, No. 85.

[2] Letters of March 2nd and 11th.

opened a wide door for English goods, English money, and English troops into Germany. It must be closed at all costs: and, with severe rebukes to Eugène and Lauriston, who were now holding the line of the middle Elbe, he charged Davoust (March 18th) to hold the long winding course of that river between Magdeburg and Hamburg. The advance of this determined leader was soon to change the face of affairs in North Germany.

Shortly before Napoleon left Paris for the seat of war, he received the new Austrian ambassador, Prince Schwarzenberg (April 9th). With a jocular courtesy that veiled the deepest irony, he complimented him on having waged *a fine campaign in* 1812. Austria's present requests were not reassuring. While professing the utmost regard for the welfare of Napoleon, she renewed her offer of mediation in a more pressing way. In fact, Metternich's aim now was to free Austria from the threatening pressure of Napoleon on the west and of Russia on the east. She must now assure to Europe a lasting peace — "not a mere truce in disguise, like all former treaties with Napoleon" — but a peace that would restrict the power of France and "establish a balance of power among the chief States."[1] Such was the secret aim of Austria's mediation. Obviously, it gave her many advantages. While posing as mediator, she could claim her share in the territorial redistribution which must accompany the peace. The blessing awarded to the peacemaker must be tangible and immediate.

Napoleon's reply to the ambassador was carefully guarded. War was not to his interest. It would cost more blood than the Moscow campaign. The great hindrance to any settlement would be England. Russia also seemed disposed to a fight *à outrance;* but if the Czar wanted peace, it was for him, not for France, to take the initiative: "I cannot take the initiative: that would be like capitulating as if I were in a fort: it is for the others to send me their proposals." And he expressed his resolve to accept no disadvantageous terms in these notable words: "If I concluded a dishonourable peace, it would be my overthrow. I am a new man; I must pay the more heed to public opinion, because I stand

[1] Metternich's "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 159; Luckwaldt, *op. cit.*, ch. vi.

in need of it. The French have lively imaginations: they love fame and excitement, and are nervous. Do you know the prime cause of the fall of the Bourbons? It dates from Rossbach." Benevolent assurances as to Napoleon's desire for peace and for the assembly of a Congress were all that Schwarzenberg could gain; and his mission was barren of result, except to increase suspicions on both sides.

In fact, Napoleon was playing his cards at Vienna. He had sent Count Narbonne thither on a special mission, the purport of which stands revealed in the envoy's "verbal note" of April 7th. In that note Austria was pressed to help France with 100,000 men, against Russia and Prussia, in case they should open hostilities; her reward was to be the rich province of Silesia. As for the rest of Prussia, two millions of that people were to be assigned to Saxony, Frederick William being thrust to the east of the lower Vistula, and left with one million subjects.[1] Such was the glittering prize dangled before Metternich. But even the prospect of regaining the province torn away by the great Frederick moved him not. He judged the establishment of equilibrium in Europe to be preferable to a mean triumph over Prussia. To her and to the Czar he had secretly held out hopes of succour in case Napoleon should prove intractable: and to this course of action he still clung. True, he trampled on *la petite morale* in neglecting to aid his nominal ally, Napoleon. But to abandon him, if he remained obdurate, was, after all, but an act of treachery to an individual who had slight claims on Austria, and whose present offer was alike immoral and insulting. Four days later Metternich notified to Russia and Prussia that the Emperor Francis would now proceed with his task of armed mediation.[2]

Austria's overtures for a general peace met with no encouragement at London. Her envoy, Count Wessen-

[1] See the whole note in Luckwaldt, Append. No. 4.

[2] Oncken, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 205. So too Metternich's letter to Nesselrode of April 21st ("Memoirs," vol. i., p. 405, Eng. ed.): "I beg of you to continue to confide in me. If Napoleon will be foolish enough to fight, let us endeavour not to meet with a reverse, which I feel to be only too possible. One battle lost for Napoleon, and all Germany will be under arms."

berg, was now treated with the same cold reserve that had been accorded to Lord Walpole at Vienna early in the year. On April 9th Castlereagh informed him that all hope of peace had failed since the "Ruler of France" had declared to the Legislative Body that *the French Dynasty reigned and would continue to reign in Spain, and that he had already stated all the sacrifices that he could consent to make for peace.*

"Whilst he [Napoleon] shall continue to declare that none of the territories arbitrarily incorporated into the French Empire shall become matter of negotiation, it is in vain to hope that His Imperial Majesty's beneficent intentions can by negotiation be accomplished. It is for His Imperial Majesty to consider, after a declaration in the nature of a defiance from the Ruler of France, a declaration highly insulting to His Imperial Majesty when his intervention for peace had been previously accepted, whether the moment is not arrived for all the Great Powers of Europe to act in concert for their common interests and honour. To obtain for their States what may deserve the name of peace they must look again to establish an Equilibrium in Europe."

Finally, the British Government refused to lend itself to a negotiation which must weaken and distract the efforts of Russia and Prussia.[1]

For the present Napoleon indulged the hope that the bribe of Silesia would range Austria's legions side by side with his own, and with Poniatowski's Poles. Animated with this hope, he left Paris before the dawn of April 15th; and, travelling at furious speed, his carriage rolled within the portals of Mainz in less than forty hours. There he stayed for a week, feeling every throb of the chief arteries of his advance. They beat full and fast; the only bad symptom was the refusal of Saxony to place her cavalry at his disposal. But, at the close of the week, Austria's attitude gave him concern. It was clear that she had not swallowed the bait of Silesia, and that her troops could not be counted on.

[1] "F. O.," Austria, No. 105. Doubtless, as Oncken has pointed out with much acerbity, Castlereagh's knowledge that Austria would suggest the modification of our maritime claims contributed to his refusal to consider her proposal for a general peace: but I am convinced, from the tone of our records, that his chief motive was his experience of Napoleon's intractability and a sense of loyalty to our Spanish allies: we were also pledged to help Sweden and Russia.

At once he takes precautions. His troops in Italy are to be made ready, the strongholds of the Upper Danube strengthened, and his German vassals are closely to watch the policy of Vienna.[1] He then proceeds to Weimar. There, on April 29th, he mounts his war-horse and gazes with searching eyes into the columns that are winding through the Thuringian vales towards Leipzig. The auguries seem favourable. The men are full of ardour : the line of march is itself an inspiration ; and the veterans cheer the young conscripts with tales of the great day of Jena and Auerstädt.

At the close of April the military situation was as follows. Eugène Beauharnais, who commanded the relics of the Grand Army, after suffering a reverse at Möckern, had retired to the line of the Elbe ; and French garrisons were thus left isolated in Danzig, Modlin, Zamosc, Glogau, Küstrin, and Stettin.[2] Napoleon's first plan of an advance direct to Stettin and Danzig having miscarried, he now sought to gather an immense force as secretly as possible near the Main, speedily to reinforce Eugène, crush the heads of the enemy's columns, and, rolling them up in disorder, carry the war to the banks of the Oder, and relieve his beleaguered garrisons by way of Leipzig and Torgau. The plan would have the further advantage of bringing a formidable force near to the Austrian frontier, and holding fast the Hapsburgs and Saxons to the French alliance.

Meanwhile the allied army was pressing westwards with no less determination. The Czar and King had addressed a menacing summons to the King of Saxony to join them, but, receiving no response, invaded his States. Thereupon Frederick Augustus fled into Bohemia, relying on an offer from Vienna which guaranteed him his German lands if he would join the Hapsburgs in their armed mediation.[3] For the present, however, Saxony was to be the battlefield of the two contending principles of nationality and Napoleonic Imperialism.

[1] Letters of April 24th.

[2] Napoleon's troops in Thorn surrendered on April 17th ; those in Spandau on April 24th (Fain, "Manuscrit de 1813," vol. ii., ch. i.).

[3] Oncken, vol. ii., p. 272.

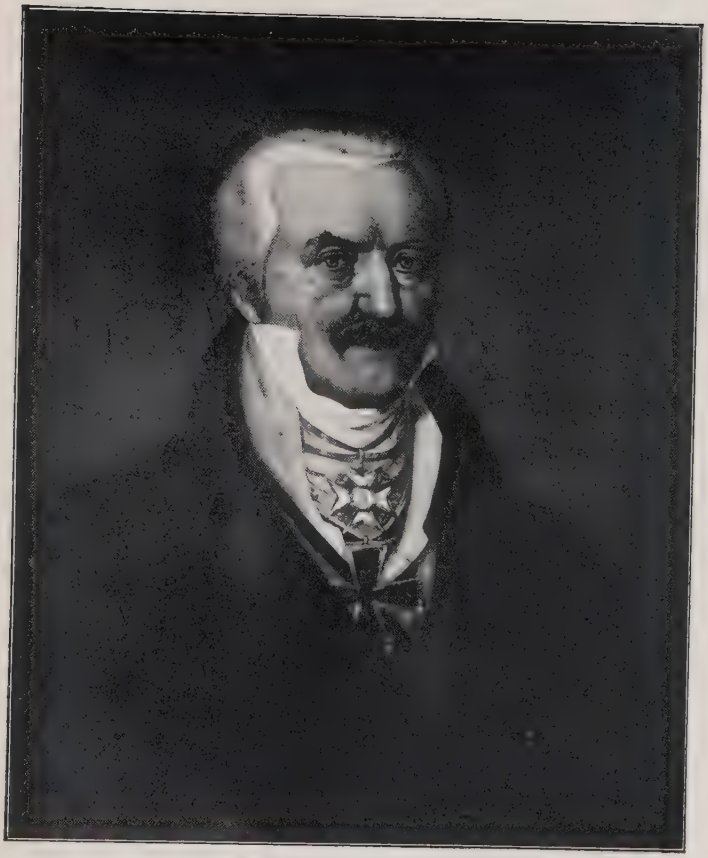
They clashed together on the historic ground of Lützen. Not only the associations of the place, but the reputation of the leaders, helped to kindle the enthusiasm of the rank and file. On the one side was the great conqueror himself, with faculties and prestige undimmed even by the greatest disaster recorded in the annals of civilized nations. He was opposed by men no less determined than himself. The illness and finally the death of the obstinate old Kutusoff had stopped the intrigues of the Slav peace party, hitherto strong in the Russian camp: and the command now devolved on Wittgenstein, a more energetic man, whose heart was in his work.

But the most inspiring influence was that of Blücher. The staunch patriot seemed to embody the best qualities of the old *régime* and of the new era. The rigour learnt in the school of Frederick the Great was vivified by the fresh young enthusiasm of the dawning age of nationality. Not that the old soldier could appreciate the lofty teachings of Fichte the philosopher and Schleiermacher the preacher. But his lack of learning — he could never write a despatch without strange torturings of his mother-tongue — was more than made up by a quenchless love of the Fatherland, by a robust common sense, which hit straight at the mark where subtler minds strayed off into side issues, by a comradeship that endeared him to every private, and by a courage that never quailed. And all these gifts, homely but invaluable in a people's war, were wrought to utmost tension by an all-absorbing passion, hatred of Napoleon. In the dark days after Jena, when, pressed back to the Baltic, his brave followers succumbed to the weight of numbers, he began to store up vials of fury against the insolent conqueror. Often he beguiled the weary hours with lunging at an imaginary foe, calling out — *Napoleon*. And this almost Satanic hatred bore the old man through seven years of humiliation; it gave him at seventy-two years of age the energy of youth; far from being sated by triumphs in Saxony and Champagne, it nerved him with new strength after the shocks to mind and body which he sustained at Ligny; it carried him and his army through the miry lanes of Wavre on to the sunset radiance of Waterloo.

What he lacked in skill and science was made up by his able coadjutors, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, the former pre-eminent in organization, the latter in strategy. After organizing Prussia's citizen army, it was Scharnhorst's fate to be mortally wounded in the first battle; but his place, as chief of staff, was soon filled by Gneisenau, in whose nature the sternness of the warrior was happily blended with the coolness of the scientific thinker. The accord between him and Blücher was close and cordial; and the latter, on receiving the degree of doctor of laws from the University of Oxford, wittily acknowledged his debt to the strategist. "Well," said he, "if I am to be a doctor, they must make Gneisenau an apothecary; for he makes up the pills and I then administer them."

On these resolute chiefs and their 33,000 Prussians fell the brunt of the fighting near Lützen. Wittgenstein, with his 35,000 Russians, showed less energy; but if a fourth Russian corps under Miloradovitch, then on the Elster, had arrived in time, the day might have closed with victory for the allies. Their plan was to cross a stream, called the Floss Graben, some five miles to the south of Lützen, storm the villages of Gross Görschen, Rahna, and Starsiedel, held by the French vanguard, and, cutting into Napoleon's line of march towards Lützen and Leipzig, throw it into disorder and rout. But their great enemy had recently joined his array to that of Eugène: he was in force, and was then planning a turning movement on the north, similar to that which threatened his south flank. Ney, on whom fell Blücher's first blows, had observed the preparations, and one of his divisions, that of Souham, had strengthened the village of Gross Görschen for an obstinate defence. The French position is thus described by Lord Cathcart, who was then present at the allied headquarters:

"The country is uncovered and open, but with much variety of hill and valley, and much intersected by hollow ways and mill-streams, the former not discernible till closely approached. The enemy, placed behind a long ridge and in a string of villages, with a hollow way in front, and a stream sufficient to float timber on the left, waited the near approach of the allies. He had an immense quantity of ordnance: the batteries in the open country were supported by masses of infantry in solid squares. The plan of our



FIELD-MARSHAL BLÜCHER.

From a mezzotint by T. Hodgetts after a miniature by Müller.

operations was to attack Gross Görschen with artillery and infantry, and meanwhile to pierce the line, to the enemy's right of the villages, with a strong column of cavalry in order to cut off the troops in the villages from support. . . . The cavalry of the Prussian Reserve, to whose lot this attack fell, made it with great gallantry; but the showers of grapeshot and musketry to which they were exposed in reaching the hollow way made it impracticable for them to penetrate; and, the enemy appearing determined to hold the villages at any expense, the affair assumed the most expensive character of attack and defence of a post repeatedly taken, lost, and retaken. The cavalry made several attempts to break the enemy's line, and in some of their attacks succeeded in breaking into the squares and cutting down the infantry. Late in the evening, Bonaparte, having called in the troops from [the side of] Leipzig and collected all his reserves, made an attack on the right of the allies, supported by the fire of several batteries advancing. The vivacity of this movement made it expedient to change the front of our nearest brigades on our right; and, as the whole cavalry from our left was ordered to the right to turn this attack, I was not without hopes of witnessing the destruction of Bonaparte and of all his army; but before the cavalry could arrive, it became so dark that nothing could be seen but the flashes of the guns." [1]

The desperate fight thus closed with a slight advantage to the French, due to the timely advance of Eugène with Macdonald's corps against the right flank of the wearied allies, when it was too late for them to make any counter-move. These had lost severely, and among the fallen was Scharnhorst, whose wound proved to be mortal. But Blücher, far from being daunted by defeat or by a wound, led seven squadrons of horse against the victors after nightfall, threw them for a brief space into a panic, and nearly charged up to the square which sheltered Napoleon. The Saxon Captain von Odeleben, who was at the French headquarters, states that the Emperor was for a few minutes quite dazed by the daring of this stroke; and he now had too few squadrons to venture on any retaliation. Both sides were, in fact, exhausted. The allies had lost 10,000 men killed and wounded, but no prisoners or guns: the French losses were nearly as heavy, and five guns and 800

[1] Cathcart's report in "F. O.," Russia, No. 85. Müffling ("Aus meinem Leben") regards the delay in the arrival of Miloradovitch, and the preparations for defence which the French had had time to make at Gross Görschen, as the causes of the allies' failure. The chief victim on the French side was Bessières, commander of the Guard.

prisoners fell into Blücher's hands. Both armies camped on the field of battle ; but, as the supplies of ammunition of the allies had run low, and news came to hand that Lauriston had dislodged Kleist from Leipzig, it was decided to retreat towards Dresden.

Napoleon cautiously followed them, leaving behind Ney's corps, which had suffered frightfully at Gross Görschen; and he strove to inspirit the conscripts, many of whom had shown unsteadiness, by proclaiming to the army that the victory of Lützen would rank above Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and Borodino.

Far from showing dejection, Alexander renewed to Cathcart his assurance of persevering in the war. At Dresden our envoy was again assured (May 7th) that the allies would not give in, but that "Austria will wear the cloak of mediation till the time her immense force is ready to act, the 24th instant. Count Stadion is hourly expected here: he will bring proposals of terms of peace and similar ones will be sent to the French headquarters. Receiving and refusing these proposals will occupy most of the time." In fact, Metternich was on the point of despatching from Vienna two envoys, Stadion to the allies, Count Bubna to Napoleon, with the offer of Austria's armed mediation.

It found him in no complaisant mood. He had entered Dresden as a conqueror: he had bitterly chidden the citizens for their support of the Prussian volunteers, and ordered them to beg their own King to return from Bohemia. To that hapless monarch he had sent an imperious mandate to come back and order the Saxon troops, who obstinately held Torgau, forthwith to hand it over to the French. On all sides his behests were obeyed, the Saxon troops grudgingly ranging themselves under the French eagles. And while he was tearing Saxony away from the national cause, he was summoned by Austria to halt. The victor met the request with a flash of defiance. After a reproachful talk with Bubna, on May 17th, he wrote two letters to the Emperor Francis. In the more official note he assured him that he desired peace, and that he assented to the opening of a Congress with that aim in view, in

which England, Russia, Prussia, and even the Spanish insurgents might take part. He therefore proposed that an armistice should be concluded for the needful preparations. But in the other letter he assured his father-in-law that he was ready to die at the head of all the generous men of France rather than become the sport of England. His resentment against Austria finds utterance in his despatch of the same day, in which he bids Caulaincourt seek an interview at once with the Czar: "The essential thing is to have a talk with him. . . . My intention is to build him a golden bridge so as to deliver him from the intrigues of Metternich. If I must make sacrifices, I prefer to make them to a straightforward enemy, rather than to the profit of Austria, which Power has betrayed my alliance, and, under the guise of mediator, means to claim the right of arranging everything." Caulaincourt is to remind Alexander how badly Austria behaved to him in 1812, and to suggest that if he treats at once before losing another battle, he can retire with honour and *with good terms for Prussia without any intervention from Austria.*

His other letters of this time show that it is on the Hapsburgs that his resentment will most heavily fall. Eugène, who had recently departed to organize the forces in Italy, is urged to threaten Austria with not fewer than 80,000 men, and to give out that he will soon have 150,000 men under arms. And, while straining every nerve in Germany, France, and Italy, Napoleon asserts that there will be an armistice for the conclusion of a general peace.[1] But the allies were not to be duped into a peace that was no peace. They had good grounds for expecting the eventual aid of Austria; and when Caulaincourt craved an interview, the Czar refused his request, thus bringing affairs once more to the arbitrament of the sword. The only effect of Caulaincourt's mission, and of Napoleon's bitter words to Bubna, was to alarm Austria.

On their side, the allies desired to risk no further check; and they had therefore taken up a strong position

[1] "Corresp.," Nos. 20017–20031. For his interview with Bubna, see Luckwaldt, p. 257.

near Bautzen, where they could receive reinforcements and effectually cover Silesia. Their extreme left rested on the spurs of the Lusatian mountains, while their long front of some four miles in extent stretched northwards along a ridge that rose between the River Spree and an affluent, and bent a convex threatening brow against that river and town. There they were joined by Barclay, whose arrival brought their total strength to 82,000 men. But again Napoleon had the advantage in numbers. Suddenly calling in Ney's and Lauriston's force of 60,000 men, which had been sent north so as to threaten Berlin, he confronted the allies with at least 130,000 men.[1]

On the first day of fighting (May 20th) the French seized the town of Bautzen, but failed to drive the allies from the hilly, wooded ground on the south. The fighting on the next day was far more serious. At dawn of a beautiful spring morning, in a country radiant with verdure and diversified by trim villages, the thunder of cannon and the sputter of skirmishers' lines presaged a stubborn conflict. The allied sovereigns from the commanding ridge at their centre could survey all the enemy's movements on the hills opposite; and our commissary, Colonel (afterwards Sir Hudson) Lowe, has thus described his view of Napoleon, who was near the French centre:

"He was about fifty paces in front of the others, accompanied by one of his marshals, with whom he walked backwards and forwards for nearly an hour. He was dressed in a plain uniform coat and a star [*sic*], with a plain hat, different from that of his marshals and generals, which was feathered. In the rear, and to the left of the ridge on which he stood, were his reserves. They were formed in lines of squadrons and battalions, appearing like a large column of battalions: their number must have been between 15,000 and 20,000. After he had retired from the eminence, several of the battalions were observed to be drawn off to his left, and to be replaced by others from the rear: the masses of his reserves appeared to suffer scarcely any diminution. . . . Those troops which were to act against our right continued their march: the others, opposite our centre, planted themselves about midway on the slope, which descended from the ridge towards our position; and, under the protection of the guns that

[1] Bernhardi's "Toll," vol. iii., pp. 490–492. Marmont gives the French 150,000; Thiers says 160,000.

crowned the ridge, they appeared to set our cavalry at defiance. . . . Yet there was no forward movement in that part. To turn and overthrow our flanks, particularly the right one, appeared now to be their main object."

This was the case. Napoleon was employing his usual tactics of assailing the allies everywhere by artillery and musketry fire, so as to keep them in their already very extended position until he could deliver a decisive blow. This was dealt, though somewhat tardily, by Ney with his huge corps at the allied right, where Barclay's 5,000 Russians were outmatched and driven back. The village of Preititz was lost, and with it the allies' communications were laid bare. It was of the utmost importance to recover the village; and Blücher, at the right centre, hard pressed though he was, sent down Kleist's brigade, which helped to wrench the prize from that Marshal's grasp. But Ney was too strong to be kept off, even by the streams of cannon-shot poured upon his dense columns. With the help of Lauriston's corps, he again slowly pressed on, began to envelop the allies' right, and threatened to cut off their retreat. Blücher was also furiously assailed by Marmont and Bertrand. On the left, it is true, the Russians had beaten back Oudinot with heavy loss; but, as Napoleon had not yet seriously drawn on his reserves, the allied chiefs decided to draw off their hard-pressed troops from this unequal contest, where victory was impossible and delay might place everything in jeopardy.

The retirement began late in the afternoon. Covered by the fire of a powerful artillery from successive crests, and by the charges of their dauntless cavalry, the allies beat off every effort of the French to turn the retreat into a rout. In vain did Napoleon press the pursuit. As at Lützen, he had cause to mourn the loss in the plains of Russia of those living waves that had swept his enemies from many a battlefield. But now their columns refused to melt away. They filed off, unbroken and defiant, under the covering wings of Uhlans and Cossacks.[1]

[1] In his bulletin Napoleon admitted having lost 11,000 to 12,000 killed and wounded in the two days at Bautzen; his actual losses were probably over 20,000. He described the allies as having 150,000 to 160,000 men, nearly double their actual numbers.

The next day witnessed the same sight, the allies drawing steadily back, showering shot from every post of vantage, and leaving not a prisoner or a caisson in the conquerors' hands. "What!" said Napoleon, "after such a butchery, no results? no prisoners?" Scarcely had he spoken these words, when a cannon-ball tore through his staff, killing one general outright, wounding another, and shattering the frame of Duroc, Duc de Friuli. Napoleon was deeply affected by this occurrence. He dismounted, went into the cottage where Duroc was taken, and for some time pressed his hand in silence. Then he uttered the words: "Duroc, there is another world where we shall meet again." To which the Grand Marshal made reply: "Yes, sire; but it will be in thirty years, when you have triumphed over your enemies and realized all the hopes of your country." After a long pause of painful silence, the Emperor mournfully left the man for whom he felt, perhaps, the liveliest sympathy and affection he ever bestowed. Under Duroc's cold, reserved exterior the Emperor knew that there beat a true heart, devoted and loyal ever since they had first met at Toulon. He received no one else for the rest of that night, and a hush of awe fell on the camp at the unwonted signs of grief of their great leader.

Possibly this loss strengthened the Emperor's desire for a truce, a feeling not lessened by a mishap befalling one of his divisions, which fell into an ambush laid by the Prussians at Hainau, and lost 1,500 men and 18 guns.

For their part, the allies equally desired a suspension of arms. Their forces were in much confusion. Alexander had superseded Wittgenstein by Barclay, who now insisted on withdrawing the Russians into Poland. To this the Prussian staff offered the most strenuous resistance. Such a confession of weakness, urged Müffling, would dishearten the troops and intimidate the Austrian statesmen who had promised speedy succour. Let the allies cling to the sheltering rampart of the Riesengebirge, where they might defy Napoleon's attacks and await the white-coats. The fortress of Schweidnitz would screen their retreat, and the Landwehr of Silesia would make good the gaps in their ranks. Towards Schweidnitz, then, the Czar ordered Barclay to retreat.

There two disappointments awaited them. The fortifications, dismantled by the French in 1807, were still in disrepair, and the 20,000 muskets bought in Austria for the Silesian levies were without touch-holes! Again Barclay declared that he must retreat into Poland, and only the offer of a truce by Napoleon deterred him from that step, which must have compromised the whole military and political situation. What would not Napoleon have given to know the actual state of things at the allied headquarters?[1] But no spy warned him of the truth; and as his own instincts prompted him to turn aside, so as to prepare condign chastisement for Austria, he continued to treat for an armistice.

"Nothing," he wrote to Eugène on June 2nd, "can be more perfidious than that Court. If I granted her present demands, she would afterwards ask for Italy and Germany. Certainly she shall have nothing from me." Events served to strengthen his resolve. The French entered Breslau in triumph, and raised the siege of Glogau. The coalition seemed to be tottering. That the punishment dealt to the allies and Austria might be severe and final, he only needed a few weeks for the reorganization of his once formidable cavalry. Then he could vent his rage upon Austria. Then he could overthrow the Hungarian horse, and crumple up the ill-trained Austrian foot. A short truce, he believed, was useless: it would favour the allies more than the French. And, under the specious plea that the discussion of a satisfactory peace must take up at least forty days, he ordered his envoy, Caulaincourt, to insist on a space of time which would admit of the French forces being fully equipped in Saxony, Bavaria, and Illyria. "If," he wrote to Caulaincourt on June 4th, "we did not wish to treat with a view to peace, we should not be so stupid as to treat for an armistice at the present time." And he urged him to insist on the limit of July 20th, "always on the same reasoning, namely, that we must have forty full days to see if we can come to an understanding." Far different was his secret warning to General Clarke, the Minister of War. To him he wrote on June 2nd:

[1] Müffling, "Aus meinem Leben."

"If I can, I will wait for the month of September to deal great blows. I wish then to be in a position to crush my enemies, though it is possible that, when Austria sees me about to do so, she may make use of her pathetic and sentimental style, in order to recognize the chimerical and ridiculous nature of her pretensions. I have wished to write you this letter so that you may thoroughly know my thoughts once for all."

And to Maret, his Minister for Foreign Affairs, he wrote on the same day:

"We must gain time, and to gain time without displeasing Austria, we must use the same language we have used for the last six months — that we can do everything if Austria is our ally. . . . Work on this, beat about the bush, and gain time. . . . You can embroider on this canvas for the next two months, and find matter for sending twenty couriers."[1]

In such cases, where Napoleon's diplomatic assurances are belied by his secret military instructions, no one who has carefully studied his career can doubt which course would be adopted. The armistice was merely the pause that would be followed by a fiercer onset, unless the allies and Austria bent before his will. Of this they gave no sign even after the blow of Bautzen. In the negotiations concerning the armistice they showed no timidity; and when, on June 4th, it was signed at Poischwitz up to July 20th, Napoleon felt some doubts whether he had not shown too much complaisance.

It was so: in granting a suspension of arms he had signed his own death warrant.

The news that reached him at Dresden in the month of June helped to stiffen his resolve once more. Davoust and Vandamme had succeeded in dispersing the raw levies of North Germany and in restoring Napoleon's authority at the mouths of the Elbe and Weser; and in this they now had the help of the Danes.

For some time the allies had been seeking to win over Denmark. But there was one insurmountable barrier in the way, the ambition of Bernadotte. As we have seen, he was desirous of signalizing his prospective succession

[1] "Lettres inédites." So too his letters to Eugène of June 11th and July 1st; and of June 11th, 17th, July 6th and 29th, to Augereau, who was to threaten Austria from Bavaria.

to the Swedish throne by bringing to his adopted country a land that would amply recompense it for the loss of Finland.[1] This could only be found in Norway, then united with Denmark; and this was the price of Swedish succour, to which the Czar had assented during the war of 1812. For reasons which need not be detailed here, Swedish help was not then forthcoming. But early in 1813 it was seen that a diversion caused by the landing of 30,000 Swedes in North Germany might be most valuable, and it was especially desired by the British Government. Still, England was loth to gain the alliance of Bernadotte at the price of Norway, which must drive Denmark into the arms of France. Castlereagh, therefore, sought to tempt him by the offer of our recent conquest of Guadeloupe. Or, if he must have Norway, would not Denmark give her assent if she received Swedish Pomerania and Lübeck? Bernadotte himself once suggested that he would be satisfied with the Bishopric of Trondjem, the northern part of Norway, if he could gain no compensation for Denmark in Germany.[2]

This offer was tentatively made. It was all one. Denmark would not hear of the cession of Norway or any part of it; and in the course of the negotiations with England she even put in a claim to the Hanse Towns, which was at once rejected. As Denmark was obdurate, Bernadotte insisted that Sweden should gain the whole of Norway as the price of her help to the allies. By the treaty of Stockholm (March 3rd, 1813) we acceded to the Russo-Swedish compact of the previous year, which assigned Norway to Sweden: we also promised to cede Guadeloupe to Bernadotte, and to pay £1,000,000 towards the support of the Swedish troops serving against Napoleon.[3] In the middle of May it was known at Copenhagen that nothing was to be hoped for from Russia and England. The Danes, therefore,

[1] See his conversation with our envoy, Thornton, reported by the latter in the "Castlereagh Letters," 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 314.

[2] "Castlereagh Letters," 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 344.

[3] Garden, vol. xiv., p. 356. We also stipulated that Sweden should not import slaves into Guadeloupe, and should repress the slave trade. When, at the Congress of Vienna, that Island was given back to France, we paid Bernadotte a money indemnity.

ranged themselves on the French side, with results that were to prove fatal to the welfare of their kingdom.

Thus the bargain which Bernadotte drove with the allies leagued Denmark against them, and thereby hindered the liberation of North Germany. But, such is the irony of fate, the transfer of Norway from Denmark to Sweden has had a permanence in which Napoleon's territorial arrangements have been signally lacking.

Bernadotte landed at Stralsund with 24,000 men, on May 18th. But the organization of his troops for the campaign was so slow that he could send no effective help to the Cossacks and patriots at Hamburg. His seeming lethargy at once aroused the Czar's suspicions. This the Swedish Prince Royal speedily detected ; and, on hearing of the armistice, he feared that another Tilsit would be the result. In a passionate letter, of June 10th, he begged Alexander not to accept peace : "To accept a peace dictated by Napoleon is to rear a sepulchre for Europe : and if this misfortune happens, only England and Sweden can remain intact."

This was the real Bernadotte. Those who called him a disguised friend of Napoleon little knew the depth of his hatred for the Emperor, a hatred which was even then compassing the earth for means of overthrowing him, and saw in the person of a lonely French exile beyond the Atlantic an instrument of vengeance. Already he had bidden his old comrade in arms, Moreau, to come over and direct the people's war against the tyrant who had exiled him ; and the victor of Hohenlinden was soon to land at Stralsund and spend his last days in serving against the tricolour.

For the present the prospects of the allies seemed gloomy indeed. In the south-east they had lost all the land up to Breslau and Glogau ; and in North Germany Davoust began to turn Hamburg into a great fortress. This was in obedience to Napoleon's orders. "I shall never feel assured," the Emperor wrote to his Marshal, "until Hamburg can be looked on as a stronghold provisioned for several months and prepared in every way for a long defence." — The ruin of commercial interests was naught to him ; and when Savary ventured to hint at the

discontent caused in French mercantile circles by these steps, he received a sharp rebuke: ". . . The cackling of the Paris bankers matters very little to me. I am having Hamburg fortified. I am having a naval arsenal formed there. Within a few months it will be one of my strongest fortresses. I intend to keep a standing army of 15,000 men there."[1] His plan was ruthlessly carried out. The wealth of Hamburg was systematically extorted in order to furnish means for a completer subjection. Boundless exactions, robbery of the bank, odious oppression of all classes, these were the first steps. Twenty thousand persons were thereafter driven out, first the young and strong as being dangerous, then the old and weak as being useless; and a once prosperous emporium of trade became Napoleon's chief northern stronghold, a centre of hope for French and Danes, and a stimulus to revenge for every patriotic Teuton.[2]

Yet the patriots were not cast down by recent events. Their one desire was for the renewal of war: their one fear was that the diplomatists would once more barter away German independence. "Our people," cried Karl Müller, "is still too lazy because it is too wealthy. Let us learn, as the Russians did, to go round and burn, and then find ourselves dagger and poison, as the Spaniards did. Against those two peoples Napoleon's troops could effect nothing." And while gloom and doubt hung over Germany, a cheering ray shot forth once more from the south-west. At the close of June came the news that Wellington had utterly routed the French at Vittoria.

[1] "Lettres inédites de Napoléon," June 18th, 1813. See too that of July 16th, *ibid.*

[2] Letters of F. Perthes.

CHAPTER XXXIV

VITTORIA AND THE ARMISTICE

It would be beyond the scope of this work to describe in detail the campaign that culminated at Vittoria. Our task must be limited to showing what was the position of affairs at the close of 1812, what were the Emperor's plans for holding part, at least, of Spain, and why they ended in utter failure.

The causes which had all along weakened the French operations in Spain operated in full force during the campaign of 1812. The jealousy of the Marshals, and, still more, their insubordination to King Joseph, prevented that timely concentration of force by which the Emperor won his greatest triumphs. Discordant aims and grudging co-operation marked their operations. Military writers have often been puzzled to account for the rash moves of Marmont, which brought on him the crushing blow of Salamanca. Had he waited but a few days before pressing Wellington hard, he would have been reinforced by King Joseph with 14,000 men.[1] But he preferred to risk all on a last dashing move rather than to wait for the King and contribute, as second in command, to securing a substantial success.

The correspondence of Joseph before and after Salamanca is instructive. We see him unable to move quickly to the support of Marmont, because the French Army of the North neglects to send him the detachment needed for the defence of Madrid ; and when, on hearing the news of Salamanca, he orders Soult to evacuate Andalusia so as to concentrate forces for the recovery of the capital, his command is for some time disobeyed. When, at last, Joseph, Soult, and Suchet concentrate their forces for a march on

[1] Joseph to Marmont, July 21st, 1812.

MARCHING THE FRENCH PRISONERS INTO SALAMANCA AFTER THE BATTLE, 1812.

From an aquatint after a drawing on the spot by Capt. Wilmot, R.H.A.

Madrid, Wellington is compelled to retire. Pushing on his rear with superior forces, Joseph then seeks to press on a battle; but again Soult moves so slowly that Wellington is able to draw off his men and make good his retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo.[1]

Apparently Joseph came off victor from the campaign of 1812; but the withdrawal of French troops towards Madrid and the valley of the Douro had fatal consequences. The south was at once lost to the French; and the sturdy mountaineers of Biscay, Navarre, and Arragon formed large bands whose persistent daring showed that the north was far from conquered. Encouraged by the presence of a small British force, they seized on most of the northern ports; and their chief, Mina, was able to meet the French northern army on almost equal terms. In the east, Suchet held his own against the Spaniards and an Anglo-Sicilian expedition. But in regard to the rest of Spain, Soult's gloomy prophecy was fulfilled: "The loss of Andalusia and the raising of the siege of Cadiz are events whose results will be felt throughout the whole of Europe."

The Spanish Cortes, or Parliament, long cooped up in Cadiz, now sought to put in force the recently devised democratic constitution. It was hailed with joy by advanced thinkers in the cities, and with loathing by the clergy, the nobles, the wealthy, and the peasants. But, though the Cortes sowed the seeds of political discord, they took one very commendable step. They appointed Wellington generalissimo of all the Spanish armies; and, in a visit which he paid to the Cortes at Christmastide, he prepared for a real co-operation of Spanish forces in the next campaign.

At that time Napoleon was uneasily looking into the state of Spanish affairs. As soon as he mastered the contents of the despatches from Madrid he counselled a course of action that promised, at any rate, to postpone the overthrow of his power. The advice is set forth in letters written on January 4th and February 12th by the Minister of War, General Clarke; for Napoleon had

[1] "Méms. du Roi Joseph," vols. viii. and ix.; Napier, bk. xix., ch. v.

practically ceased to correspond with his brother. In the latter of these despatches Clarke explained in some detail the urgent need of acting at once, while the English were inactive, so as to stamp out the ever-spreading flame of revolt in the northern provinces. Two French armies, that of the North and the so-called "Army of Portugal," were to be told off for this duty; and Joseph was informed that his armies of the south and of the centre would for the present suffice to hold the British in check. As to Joseph's general course of action, it was thus prescribed:

"The Emperor commands me to reiterate to your Majesty that the use of Valladolid as a residence and as headquarters is an indispensable preliminary. From that place must be sent out on the Burgos road, and on other fit points, the troops which are to strengthen or to second the army of the north. Madrid, and even Valencia, form parts of this system only as posts to be held by your extreme left, not as places to be kept by a concentration of forces. . . . To occupy Valladolid and Salamanca, to use the utmost exertion to pacify Navarre and Arragon, to keep the communication with France rapid and safe, to be always ready to take the offensive — these are the Emperor's instructions for the campaign, and the principles on which all its operations ought to be founded. . . ."[1]

A fortnight later, Clarke bade the King threaten Ciudad Rodrigo so as to make Wellington believe that the French would invade Portugal. He was also to lay heavy contributions on Madrid and Toledo. In fact, the capital was to be held only as long as it could be squeezed.

Such were the plans. They show clearly that the Emperor was impressed with the need of crushing the rising in the north of Spain; for he ordered as great a force against Mina and his troublesome bands as he deemed necessary to watch the Portuguese frontier. Clausel was charged to stamp out the northern rising, and Napoleon seems to have judged that this hardy fighter would end this tedious task before Wellington dealt any serious blows. The miscalculation was to be fatal. Mina was not speedily to be beaten, nor was the British general the slow unenterprising leader that the Emperor took him to be. And then again, in spite of all the experiences of the past, Napoleon failed to allow for

[1] "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. ix., p. 195.

the delays caused by the capture of his couriers, or by their long detours. Yet, never were these more serious. Clarke's first urgent despatch, that of January 4th, did not reach the King until February 16th.[1] When its directions were being doubtfully obeyed, those quoted above arrived on March 12th, and led to changes in the disposition of the troops. Thus the forces opposed to Wellington were weakened in order to crush the northern revolt, and yet these detachments were only sent north at the close of March for a difficult enterprise which was not to be completed before the British leader threw his sword decisively into the scales of war.

Joseph has been severely blamed for his tardy action: but, in truth, he was in a hopeless *impasse:* on all sides he saw the walls of his royal prison house closing in. The rebels in the north cut off the French despatches, thus forestalling his movements and delaying by some weeks his execution of Napoleon's plans. Worst of all, the Emperor withdrew the pith and marrow of his forces: 1,200 officers, 6,000 non-commissioned officers, and some 24,000 of the most seasoned soldiers filed away towards France to put strength and firmness into the new levies of the line, or to fill out again the skeleton battalions and squadrons of the Imperial Guard.[2]

It is strange that Napoleon did not withdraw all his troops from Spain. They still exceeded 150,000 men; and yet, after he had flung away army after army, the Spaniards were everywhere in arms, except in Valencia. The north defied all the efforts of Clausel for several weeks, until he declared that it would take 50,000 men three months to crush the mountaineers.[3] Above all, Wellington was known to be mustering a formidable force on the Portuguese borders. In truth, Napoleon seems long to have been afflicted with political colour blindness in Spanish affairs. Even now he only dimly saw the

[1] Napier and Alison say March 18th, which is refuted by the "Méms. du Roi Joseph," vol. ix., p. 131.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 464.

[3] As a matter of fact he had 50,000 there for three months, and did not succeed. See Clarke's letter to Clausel, "Méms. du Roi Joseph," vol. ix., p. 251.

ridiculous falsity of his brother's position — a parvenu among the proudest nobility in the world, a bankrupt King called upon to keep up regal pomp before a ceremonious race, a benevolent ruler forced to levy heavy loans and contributions on a sensitive populace whose goodwill he earnestly strove to gain, an easy-going epicure spurred on to impetuous action by orders from Paris which he dared not disregard and could not execute, a peace-loving valetudinarian upon whom was thrust the task of controlling testy French Marshals, and of holding a nation in check and Wellington at bay.

The concentration on which Napoleon laid such stress would doubtless have proved a most effective step had the French forces on the Douro been marshalled by an able leader. But here, again, the situation had been fatally compromised by the recall of the ablest of the French commanders in Spain. Wellington afterwards said that Soult was second only to Masséna among the French Marshals pitted against him. He had some defects. "He did not quite understand a field of battle : he was an excellent tactician, knew very well how to bring his troops up to the field, but not so well how to use them when he had brought them up."[1] But the fact remains that, with the exception of his Oporto failure, Soult came with credit, if not glory, out of every campaign waged against Wellington. Yet he was now recalled.

Indeed, this vain and ambitious man had mortally offended King Joseph. After Salamanca he had treated him with gross disrespect. Not only did he, at first, refuse to move from Andalusia, but he secretly revealed to six French generals his fears that Joseph was betraying the French cause by treating with the Spanish national government at Cadiz. He even warned Clarke of the King's supposed intentions, in a letter which by chance fell into Joseph's hands.[2] The hot blood of the Bonapartes boiled at this underhand dealing, and he at once despatched Colonel Desprez to Napoleon to demand Soult's instant recall. The Emperor, who was then at Moscow, temporized. Perhaps he was not sorry to have in Spain

[1] Stanhope's "Conversations with Wellington," p. 20.
[2] "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. ix., p. 60.

so vigilant an informer ; and he made the guarded reply that Soult's suspicions did not much surprise him, that they were shared by many other French generals, who thought King Joseph preferred Spain to France, and that he could not recall Soult, as he had "the only military head in Spain." The threatening war-cloud in Central Europe led Napoleon to change his resolve. Soult was recalled, but not disgraced, and, after the death of Bessières, he received the command of the Imperial Guard.

The commander who now bore the brunt of responsibility was Jourdan, who acted as major-general at the King's side, a post which he had held once before, but had forfeited owing to his blunders in the summer of 1809. The victor of Fleurus was now fifty-one years of age, and his failing health quite unfitted him for the Herculean tasks of guiding refractory generals and of propping up a tottering monarchy. For Jourdan's talents Napoleon had expressed but scanty esteem, whereas on many occasions he extolled the abilities of Suchet, who was now holding down Valencia and Catalonia. Certainly Suchet's tenacity and administrative skill rendered his stay in those rich provinces highly desirable. But the best talent was surely needed on Wellington's line of advance, namely, at Valladolid. To the shortcomings and mishaps of Joseph and Jourdan in that quarter may be chiefly ascribed the collapse of the French power.

In fact, the only part of Spain that now really interested Napoleon was the north and north-east. So long as he firmly held the provinces north of the Ebro, he seems to have cared little whether Joseph reigned, or did not reign, at Madrid. All that concerned him was to hold the British at bay from the line of the Douro, while French authority was established in the north and north-east. This he was determined to keep ; and probably he had already formed the design, later on to be mooted to Ferdinand VII. at Valençay, of restoring him to the throne of Spain and of indemnifying him with Portugal for the loss of the north-eastern provinces. This scheme may even have formed part of a plan of general pacification ; for at Dresden, on May 17th, he proposed to Austria the admission of representatives of the Spanish *insurgents* to the European

Congress. But it is time to turn from the haze of conjecture to the sharp outlines of Wellington's campaign.[1]

While the French cause in Spain was crumbling to pieces, that of the patriots was being firmly welded together by the organizing genius of Wellington. By patient efforts, he soon had the Spanish and Portuguese contingents in an efficient condition: and, as large reinforcements had come from England, he was able early in May to muster 70,000 British and Portuguese troops and 30,000 Spaniards for a move eastwards. Murray's force tied Suchet fast to the province of Valencia; Clausel was fully employed in Navarre, and thus Joseph's army on the Douro was left far too weak to stem Wellington's tide of war. Only some 45,000 French were ready in the districts between Salamanca and Valladolid. Others remained in the basin of the Tagus in case the allies should burst in by that route.

Wellington kept up their illusions by feints at several points, while he prepared to thrust a mighty force over the fords of the Tormes and Esla. He completely succeeded. While Joseph and Jourdan were haltingly mustering their forces in Leon, the allies began that series of rapid flanking movements on the north which decided the campaign. Swinging forward his powerful left wing, he manœuvred the French out of one strong position after another. The Tormes, the Esla, the Douro, the Carrion, the Pisuerga, none of these streams stopped his advance. Joseph nowhere showed fight; he abandoned even the castle of Burgos, and, fearing to be cut off from France, retired behind the upper Ebro.

The official excuse given for this rapid retreat was the lack of provisions: but the diaries of two British officers, Tomkinson and Simmons, show that they found the country between the Esla and the Ebro for the most part well stocked and fertile. Simmons, who was with the famous Light Division, notes that the Rifles did not fire a shot after breaking up their winter quarters, until they skirmished with the French in the hills near the source of the Ebro. The French retreat was really necessary in order

[1] Thiers, bk. xlix.; "Nap. Corresp.," No. 20019; Baumgarten, vol. i., p. 577.

VITTORIA IN 1813, FROM THE WEST.

After a lithograph from Colonel Staveley's "Survey."

to bring the King's forces into touch with the corps of Generals Clausel and Foy, in Navarre and Biscay respectively. Joseph had already sent urgent orders to call in these corps; for, as he explained to Clarke, the supreme need now was to beat Wellington; that done, the partisan warfare would collapse.

But Clausel and Foy took their orders, not from the King, but from Paris; and up to June 5th, Joseph heard not a word from Clausel. At last, on June 15th, that general wrote from Pamplona that he had received Joseph's commands of May 30th and June 7th, and would march to join him. Had he at once called in his mobile columns and covered with all haste the fifty miles that separated him from the King, the French army would have been the stronger by at least 14,000 men. But his concentration was a work of some difficulty, and he finally drew near to Vittoria on June 22nd, when the French cause was irrecoverably lost.[1]

Wellington, meanwhile, had foreseen the supreme need of despatch. Early in the year he had urged our naval authorities to strengthen our squadron on the north of Spain, so that he might in due course make Santander his base of supplies. Naval support was not forthcoming to the extent that he expected;[2] but after leaving Burgos he was able to make some use of the northern ports, thereby shortening his line of communications. In fact, the Vittoria campaign illustrates the immense advantages gained by a leader, who is sure of his rear and of one flank, over an enemy who is ever nervous about his communications. The British squadron acted like a covering force on the north to Wellington: it fed the guerilla warfare in Biscay, and menaced Joseph with real though invisible dangers. This explains, in large measure, why our commander moved forward so rapidly, and pushed forward his left wing with such persistent daring. Mountain fastnesses and roaring torrents stayed not the advance of his light troops on that side. Near the sources of the Ebro, the

[1] "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. ix., pp. 284, 294. Joseph's first order to Clausel was sent under protection of *an escort of* 1,500 *men.*

[2] See Lord Melville's complaint as to Wellington's unreasonable charges on this head in the "Letters of Sir B. Martin" ("Navy Records," 1898).

French again felt their communications with France threatened, and falling back from the main stream, up the defile carved out by a tributary, the Zadora, they halted wearily in the basin of Vittoria.

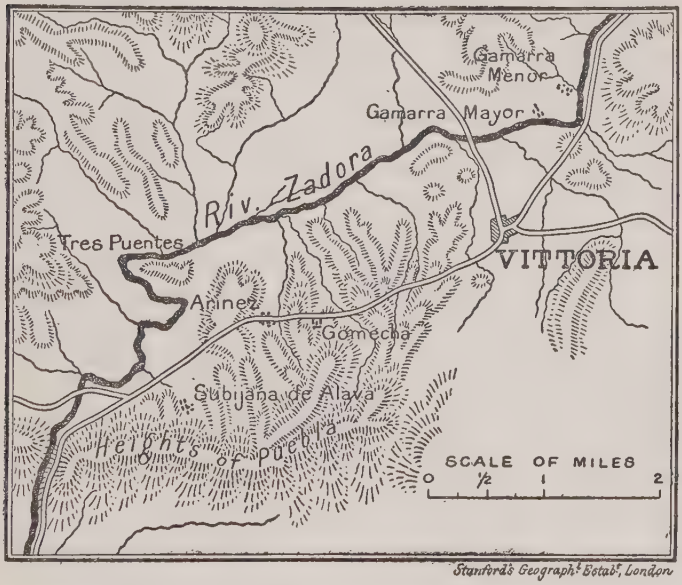
There Joseph and Jourdan determined to fight. As usual, there had been recriminations at headquarters. "Jourdan, ill and angry, kept his room; and the King was equally invisible."[1] Few orders were given. The town was packed with convoys and vehicles of all kinds, and it was not till dawn of that fatal midsummer's day that the last convoy set out for France, under the escort of 3,000 troops. Nevertheless, Joseph might hope to hold his own. True, he had but 70,000 troops at hand, or perhaps even fewer; yet on the evening of the 19th he heard that Clausel had set out from Pamplona.

At once he bade him press on his march, but that message fell into the enemy's hands.[2] Relying, then, on help which was not to arrive, Joseph confronted the allied army. It numbered, in all, 83,000 men, though Napier asserts that not more than 60,000 took part in the fighting. The French left wing rested on steep hills near Puebla, which tower above the River Zadora, and leave but a narrow defile. Their centre held a less precipitous ridge, which trends away to the north parallel to the middle reaches of that stream. Higher up its course, the Zadora describes a sharp curve that protects the ridge on its northern flank; and if a daring foe drove the defenders away from these heights, they could still fall back on two lower ridges nearer Vittoria. But these natural advantages were not utilized to the full. The bridges opposite the French front were not broken, and the defenders were far too widely spread out. Their right wing, consisting of the "Army of Portugal" under General Reille, guarded the bridge north of Vittoria, and was thus quite out of touch with the main force that held the hills five miles away to the west.

[1] Miot de Melito, vol. ii., ch. xviii.

[2] Clausel afterwards complained that if he had received any order to that effect he could have pushed on so as to be at Vittoria ("Méms. du Roi Joseph," vol. ix., p. 454). The muster-rolls of the French were lost at Vittoria. Napier puts their force at 70,000; Thiers at 54,000; Jourdan at 50,000.

The dawn broke heavily; the air was thick with rain and driving mists, under cover of which Hill's command moved up against the steeps of Puebla. A Spanish brigade, under General Morillo, nimbly scaled those slopes on the south-west, gained a footing near the summit, and, when reinforced, firmly held their ground. Meanwhile the rest of Hill's troops threaded their way beneath through the pass of Puebla, and, after a tough



fight, wrested the village of Subijana from the foe. In vain did Joseph and Jourdan bring up troops from the centre; the British and Spaniards were not to be driven either from the village or from the heights. Wellington's main array was also advancing to attack the French centre occupying the ridge behind the Zadora; and Graham, after making a long détour to the north through very broken country, sought to surprise Reille and drive him from the bridge north of Vittoria. In this advance the guidance of the Spanish irregulars, under Colonel Longa, was of priceless value. So well was Graham

covered by their bands, that, up to the moment of attack, Reille knew not that a British division was also at hand. At the centre, too, a Spanish peasant informed Wellington that the chief bridge of Tres Puentes was unguarded, and guided Kemp's brigade through rocky ground to within easy charging distance.

The bridge was seized, Joseph's outposts were completely turned, and time was given for the muster of Picton's men. Stoutly they breasted the slopes, and unsteadied the weakened French centre, which was also assailed on its northern flank. At the same time Joseph's left wing began to waver under Hill's repeated onslaughts; and, distracted by the distant cannonade, which told of a stubborn fight between Graham and Reille, the King now began to draw in his lines towards Vittoria. For a time the French firmly held the village of Arinez, but Picton's men were not to be denied. They burst through the rear-guard, and the battle now became a running fight, extending over some five miles of broken country. At the last slopes, close to Vittoria, the defenders made a last heroic stand, and their artillery dealt havoc among the assailants; but our fourth division, rushing forward into the smoke, carried a hill that commanded their left, and the day was won. Nothing now remained for the French but a speedy retreat, while the gallant Reille could still hold Graham's superior force at bay.

There, too, the fight at last swirled back, albeit with many a rallying eddy, into Vittoria. That town was no place of refuge, but a death-trap; for Graham had pushed on a detachment to Durana, on the high-road leading direct to France, and thus blocked the main line of retreat. Joseph's army was now in pitiable plight. Pent up in the choked streets of Vittoria, torn by cannon-shot from the English lines, the wreckage of its three armies for a time surged helplessly to and fro, and then broke away eastwards towards Pamplona. On that side only was safety to be found, for British hussars scoured the plain to the north-east, lending wings to the fight. The narrow causeway, leading through marshes, was soon blocked, and panic seized on all: artillerymen cut their traces and fled; carriages crowded with women, once

called gay, but now frantic with terror, wagons laden with ammunition, stores, treasure-chests, and the booty amassed by generals and favourites during five years of warfare and extortion, all were left pell-mell. Jourdan's Marshal's bâton was taken, and was sent by Wellington to the Prince Regent, who acknowledged it by conferring on the victor the title of Field-Marshal.

Richly was the title deserved. After four years of battling with superior numbers, the British leader at last revealed the full majesty of his powers now that the omens were favourable. In six weeks he marched more than five hundred miles, crossed six rivers, and, using the Navarrese revolt as the anvil, dealt the hammer stroke of Vittoria. It cost Napoleon 151 pieces of cannon, nearly all the stores piled up for his Peninsular campaigns — and Spain itself.[1]

As for Joseph, he left his carriage and fled on horseback towards France, reaching St. Jean de Luz "with only a napoleon left." He there also assured his queen that he had always preferred a private station to the grandeur and agitations of public life.[2] This, indeed, was one of the many weak points of his brother's Spanish policy. It rested on the shoulders of an amiable man who was better suited to the ease of Naples than to the Herculean toils of Madrid. Napoleon now saw the magnitude of his error. On July 1st he bade Soult leave Dresden at once for Paris. There he was to call on Clarke, with him repair to Cambacérès; and, as Lieutenant-General, take steps to re-establish the Emperor's affairs in Spain. A Regency was to govern in place of Joseph, who was ordered to remain, according to the state of affairs, either at Burgos(!) or St. Sebastian or Bayonne.

"All the follies in Spain" (he wrote to Cambacérès on that day) "are due to the mistaken consideration I have shown the King, who not only does not know how to command, but does not even know his own value enough to leave the military command alone."

[1] Wellington's official account of the fight states that the French got away only two of their cannon; and Simmons, "A British Rifleman," asserts that the last of these was taken near Pamplona on the 24th. Wellington generously assigned much credit to the Spanish troops — far more than Napier will allow.

[2] Ducasse, "Les rois, frères de Napoléon."

And to Savary he wrote two days later :

"It is hard to imagine anything so inconceivable as what is now going on in Spain. The King could have collected 100,000 picked men: *they might have beaten the whole of England.*"

Reflection, however, showed him that the fault was his own ; that if, as had occurred to him when he left Paris, he had intrusted the supreme command in Spain to Soult, the disaster would never have happened.[1] His belief in Soult's capacity was justified by the last events of the Peninsular War. But neither his splendid rally of the scattered French forces, nor the skilful movements of Clausel and Suchet, nor the stubborn defence of Pamplona and San Sebastian, could now save the French cause. The sole result of these last operations was to restore the lustre of the French arms and to keep 150,000 men in Spain when the scales of war were wavering in the plains of Saxony.

Napoleon's letters betray the agitation which he felt even at the first vague rumours of the disaster of Vittoria. On the first three days of July he penned at Dresden seven despatches on that topic in a style so vehement that the compilers of the "Correspondance de Napoléon" have thought it best to omit them. He further enjoined the utmost reserve, and ordered the official journals merely to state that, after a brisk engagement at Vittoria, the French army was concentrating in Arragon, and that the British had captured about a hundred guns and wagons left behind in the town for lack of horses.

There was every reason for hiding the truth. He saw how seriously it must weaken his chances of browbeating the Eastern Powers, and of punishing Austria for her armed mediation. Hitherto there seemed every chance of his succeeding. The French standards flew on all the fortresses of the Elbe and Oder. Hamburg was fast becoming a great French camp, and Denmark was ranged on the side of France.

Indeed, on reviewing the situation on June 4th, the German publicist, Gentz, came to the conclusion that

[1] "Lettres inédites de Napoléon," July 1st, 3rd, 15th, and 20th.

the Emperor Francis would probably end his vacillations by some inglorious compromise. The Kaiser desired peace; but he also wished to shake off the irksome tutelage of his son-in-law, and regain Illyria. For the present he wavered. Before the news of Lützen reached him, he undoubtedly encouraged the allies: but that reverse brought about a half left turn towards Napoleon. "Boney's success at Lützen," wrote Sir G. Jackson in his Diary, "has made Francis reconsider his half-formed resolutions." Here was the chief difficulty for the allies. Their fortunes, and the future of Europe, rested largely on the decision of a man whose natural irresolution of character had been increased by adversity. Fortunately, the news from Spain finally helped to incline him towards war; but for some weeks his decision remained the unknown quantity in European politics. Fortunately, too, he was amenable to the gentle but determining pressure of the kind which Metternich could so skilfully exert. That statesman, as usual, schemed and balanced. He saw that Austria had much to gain by playing the waiting game. Her forces were improving both in numbers and efficiency, and under cover of her offer of armed mediation were holding strong positions in Bohemia. In fact, she was regaining her prestige, and might hope to impose her will on the combatants at the forthcoming European Congress at Prague. Metternich, therefore, continued to pose as the well-wisher of both parties and the champion of a reasonable and therefore durable compromise.

He had acted thus, not only in his choice of measures, but in his selection of men. He had sent to Napoleon's headquarters at Dresden Count Bubna, whose sincere and resolute striving for peace served to lull animosity and suspicions in that place. But to the allied headquarters, now at Reichenbach, he had despatched Count Stadion, who worked no less earnestly for war. While therefore the Courts of St. Petersburg, Berlin, and London hoped, from Stadion's language, that Austria meant to draw the sword, Napoleon inclined to the belief that she would never do more than rattle her scabbard, and would finally yield to his demands.

Stadion's letters to Metternich show that he feared this result. He pressed him to end the seesaw policy of the last six months. "These people are beaten owing to our faults, our half wishes, our half measures, and presently they will get out of the scrape and leave us to pay the price." As for Austria's forthcoming demand of Illyria, who would guarantee that the French Emperor would let her keep it six months, if he remained master of Germany and Italy? Only by a close union with the allies could she be screened from Napoleon's vengeance, which must otherwise lead to her utter destruction. Let, then, all timid counsellors be removed from the side of the Emperor Francis. "I cling to my oft-expressed conviction that we are no longer masters of our own affairs, and that the tide of events will carry us along."[1]

If we may judge from Metternich's statements in his "Memoirs," written many years later, he was all along in secret sympathy with these views. But his actions and his official despatches during the first six weeks of the armistice bore another complexion; they were almost colourless, or rather, they were chameleonic. At Dresden they seemed, on the whole, to be favourable to France: at Reichenbach, when coloured by Stadion, they were thought to hold out the prospect of another European coalition.

A new and important development was given to Austrian policy when, on June 7th, Metternich drew up the conditions on which Austria would insist as the basis of her armed mediation. They were as follows: (1) Dissolution of the Duchy of Warsaw; (2) A consequent reconstruction of Prussia, with the certainty of recovering Danzig; (3) Restitution of the Illyrian provinces, including Dalmatia, to Austria; (4) Re-establishment of the Hanse Towns, and an eventual arrangement as to the cession of the other parts of the 32nd military division [the part of North Germany annexed by Napoleon in 1810]. To these were added two other conditions on which Austria would lay great stress, namely: (5) Dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine; (6) Recon-

[1] Stadion to Metternich, May 30th, June 2nd and 8th; in Luckwaldt, p. 382.

struction of Prussia comformably with her territorial extent previous to 1805.

At first sight these terms seem favourable to the allied cause; but they were much less extensive than the proposals submitted by Alexander in the middle of May. Therefore, when they were set forth to the allies at Reichenbach, they were unfavourably received, and for some days suspicion of Austria overclouded the previous goodwill. It was removed only by the labours of Stadion and by the tact which Metternich displayed during an interview with the Czar at Opotschna (June 17th).

Alexander came there prejudiced against Metternich as a past master in the arts of double-dealing: he went away convinced that he meant well for the allies. "What will become of us," asked the Czar, "if Napoleon accepts your mediation?" To which the statesman replied: "If he refuses it, the truce will be at an end, and you will find us in the ranks of your allies. If he accepts it, the negotiations will prove to a certainty that Napoleon is neither wise nor just; and the issue will be the same." Alexander knew enough of his great enemy's character to discern the sagacity of Metternich's forecast; and both Frederick William and he agreed to the Austrian terms.[1] Accordingly, on June 27th, a treaty was secretly signed at Reichenbach, wherein Austria pledged herself to an active alliance with Russia and Prussia in case Napoleon should not, by the end of the armistice, have acceded to her four *conditiones sine quibus non*. To these was now added a demand for the evacuation of all Polish and Prussian fortresses by French troops, a stipulation which it was practically certain that Napoleon would refuse.[2]

The allies meanwhile were gaining the sinews of war

[1] Cathcart's "most secret" despatch of June $\frac{4}{16}$ from Reichenbach. Just a month earlier he reported that the Czar's proposals to Austria included all these terms in an absolute form, and also the separation of Holland from France, the restoration of the Bourbons to Spain, and "L'Italie libre dans toutes ses parties du Gouvernement et de l'influence de la France." Such were also Metternich's *private* wishes, with the frontier of the Oglio on the S.W. for Austria. See Oncken, vol. ii., p. 614. The official terms were in part due to the direct influence of the Emperor Francis.

[2] In a secret article of the Treaty we promised to advance to Austria a subsidy of £500,000 as soon as she should join the allies.

from England. The Czar had informed Cathcart at Kalisch that, though he did not press our Government for subsidies, yet he would not be able to wage a long campaign without such aid. On June 14th and 15th, our ambassador signed treaties with Russia and Prussia, whereby we agreed to aid the former by a yearly subsidy of £1,133,334, and the latter by a sum of half that amount, and to meet all the expenses of the Russian fleet then in our harbours. The Czar and the King of Prussia bound themselves to maintain in the field (exclusive of garrisons) 160,000 and 80,000 men respectively.[1]

There was every reason for these preparations. Everything showed that Napoleon was bent on browbeating the allies. On June 17th Napoleon's troops destroyed or captured Lützow's volunteers at Kitzen near Leipzig. The excuse for this act was that Lützow had violated the armistice; but he had satisfied Nisas, the French officer there in command, that he was loyally observing it. Nevertheless, his brigade was cut to pieces. The protests of the allies received no response except that Lützow's men might be exchanged — as if they had been captured in fair fight. Finally, Napoleon refused to hear the statement of Nisas in his own justification, reproached him for casting a slur on the conduct of French troops, and deprived him of his command.[2]

[1] Martens, vol. ix., pp. 568–575. Our suspicion of Prussia reappears (as was almost inevitable after her seizure of Hanover), not only in the smallness of the sum accorded to her — for we granted £2,000,000 in all to the Swedish, Hanseatic, and Hanoverian contingents — but also in the stipulation that she should assent to the eventual annexation of the formerly Prussian districts of East Frisia and Hildesheim to Hanover. We also refused to sign the Treaty of Reichenbach until she, most unwillingly, assented to this prospective cession. This has always been thought in Germany a mean transaction; but, as Castlereagh pointed out, those districts were greatly in the way of the development of Hanover. Prussia was to have an indemnity for the sacrifice; and we bore the chief burden in the issue of "federative paper notes," which enabled the allies to prepare for the campaign ("Castlereagh Papers," 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 355; 3rd series, vol. i., pp. 7–17; and "Bath Archives," vol. ii., p. 86). Moreover, we were then sending 30,000 muskets to Stralsund and Colberg for the use of Prussian troops (Despatch from "F. O.," July 28th, to Thornton, "Sweden," No. 79). On July 6th we agreed to pay the cost of a German Legion of 10,000 men under the Czar's orders. Its Commissary was Colonel Lowe.

[2] For the official reports see Garden, vol. xiv., pp. 486–499; also Bausset's account, "Cour de Napoléon."

But it was Napoleon's bearing towards Metternich, in an interview held on June 26th at the Marcolini Palace at Dresden, that most clearly revealed the inflexibility of his policy. Ostensibly, the interview was fixed in order to arrange the forms of the forthcoming Congress that was to insure the world's peace. In reality, however, Napoleon hoped to intimidate the Austrian statesman, and to gather from him the results of his recent interview with the Czar. Carrying his sword at his side and his hat under his arm, he received Metternich in state. After a few studied phrases about the health of the Emperor Francis, his brow clouded and he plunged *in medias res:* "So you too want war: well, you shall have it. I have beaten the Russians at Bautzen: now you wish your turn to come. Be it so, the rendezvous shall be in Vienna. Men are incorrigible: experience is lost upon you. Three times I have replaced the Emperor Francis on his throne. I have promised always to live at peace with him: I have married his daughter. At the time I said to myself — you are perpetrating a folly; but it was done, and now I repent of it."

Metternich saw his advantage: his adversary had lost his temper and forgotten his dignity. He calmly reminded Napoleon that peace depended on him; that his power must be reduced within reasonable limits, or he would fall in the ensuing struggle. No matador fluttered the cloak more dextrously. Napoleon rushed on. No coalition should daunt him: he could overpower any number of men — everything except the cold of Russia — and the losses of that campaign had been made good. He then diverged into stories about that war, varied by digressions as to his exact knowledge of Austria's armaments, details of which were sent to him daily. To end this wandering talk, Metternich reminded him that his troops now were not men but boys. Whereupon the Emperor passionately replied: "You do not know what goes on in the mind of a soldier; a man such as I does not take much heed of the lives of a million of men," — and he threw aside his hat. Metternich did not pick it up.

Napoleon noticed the unspoken defiance, and wound up by saying: "When I married an Archduchess I tried

to weld the new with the old, Gothic prejudices with the institutions of my century: I deceived myself, and this day I see the whole extent of my error. It may cost me my throne, but I will bury the world beneath its ruins." In dismissing Metternich, the Emperor used the device which, shortly before the rupture with England in 1803, he had recommended Talleyrand to employ upon Whitworth, namely, after trying intimidation to resort to cajolery. Touching the Minister on the shoulder, he said quietly: "Well, now, do you know what will happen? You will not make war on me?" To which came the quick reply: "You are lost, Sire; I had the presentiment of it when I came: now, in going, I have the certainty." In the anteroom the generals crowded around the illustrious visitor. Berthier had previously begged him to remember that Europe, and France, urgently needed peace; and now, on conducting him to his carriage, he asked him whether he was satisfied with Napoleon. "Yes," was the answer, "he has explained everything to me: it is all over with the man."[1]

Substantially, this was the case. Napoleon's resentment against Austria, not unnatural under the circumstances, had hurried him into outbursts that revealed the inner fires of his passion. In a second interview, on June 30th, he was far more gracious, and allowed Austria to hope that she would gain Illyria. He also accepted Austria's mediation; and it was stipulated that a Congress should meet at Prague for the discussion of a general pacification. Metternich appeared highly pleased with this condescension, but he knew by experience that Napoleon's caresses were as dangerous as his wrath; and he remained on his guard. The Emperor soon disclosed his real aim. In gracious tones he added:

[1] Any account of a private interview between two astute schemers must be accepted with caution; and we may well doubt whether Metternich really was as firm, not to say provocative, as he afterwards represented in his "Memoirs." But, on the whole, his account is more trustworthy than that of Fain, Napoleon's secretary, in his "Manuscrit de 1813," vol. ii., ch. ii. Fain places the interview on June 28th; in "Napoleon's Corresp." it is reprinted, but assigned to June 23rd. The correct date is shown by Oncken to have been June 26th. Bignon's account of it (vol. xii., ch. iv.) is marked by his usual bias.

"But this is not all: I must have a prolongation of the armistice. How can we between July 5th and 20th end a negotiation which ought to embrace the whole world?" He proposed August 20th as the date of its expiration. To this Metternich demurred because the allies already thought the armistice too long for their interests. August 10th was finally agreed on, but not without much opposition on the part of the allied generals, who insisted that such a prolongation would greatly embarrass them.

Outwardly, this new arrangement seemed to portend peace: but it is significant that on June 28th Napoleon wrote to Eugène that all the probabilities appeared for war; and on June 30th he wrote his father-in-law a cold and almost threatening letter.[1]

Late on that very evening came to hand the first report of the disaster of Vittoria. Despite all Napoleon's precautions, the news leaked out at Dresden. Bubna's despatches of July 5th, 6th, and 7th soon made it known to the Emperor Francis, then at Brandeis in Bohemia. Thence it reached the allied monarchs and Bernadotte on July 12th at Trachenberg in the midst of negotiations which will be described presently. The effect of the news was very great. The Czar at once ordered a Te Deum to be sung: "It is the first instance," wrote Cathcart, "of a Te Deum having been sung at this Court for a victory in which the forces of the Russian Empire were not engaged." [2] But its results were more than ceremonial: they were practical. Our envoy, Thornton, who followed Bernadotte to Trachenberg, states that Bubna had learnt that Wellington had completely routed three French corps with a *débandade* like that of the retreat from Moscow. Thornton adds: "The Prince Royal [Bernadotte] thinks that the French army will be very soon withdrawn from Silesia and that Buonaparte must soon commence his retreat nearer the Rhine. I have no doubt of its effect upon Austria. This is visible in the answer of the Em-

[1] Cathcart reported on July 8th, that Schwarzenberg had urged an extension of the armistice, so that Austria might meet the "vast and unexpected" preparations of France ("Russia," No. 86).

[2] "Russia," No. 86.

peror [Francis] to the Prince, which came to-day from the Austrian headquarters." That letter, dated July 9th, was indeed of the most cordial character. It expressed great pleasure at hearing that "the obstacles which seemed to hinder the co-operation of the forces under your Royal Highness are now removed. I regard this co-operation as one of the surest supports of the cause which the Powers may once more be called on to defend by a war which can only offer chances of success unless sustained by the greatest and most unanimous measures."[1] Further than this Francis could scarcely go without pledging himself unconditionally to an alliance; and doubtless it was the news of Vittoria that evoked these encouraging assurances.

It is even more certain that the compact of Trachenberg also helped to end the hesitations of Austria. This compact arose out of the urgent need of adopting a general plan of campaign, and, above all, of ending the disputes between the allied sovereigns and Bernadotte. The Prince Royal of Sweden had lost their confidence through his failure to save Hamburg from the French and Danes. Yet, on his side, he had some cause for complaint. In the previous summer, Alexander led him to expect the active aid of thirty-five thousand Russian troops for a campaign in Norway: but, mainly at the instance of England, he now landed in Pomerania and left Sweden exposed to a Danish attack on the side of Norway. He therefore suggested an interview with the allied sovereigns, a request which was warmly seconded by Castlereagh.[2] Accordingly it took place at Trachenberg, a castle north of Breslau, with the happiest results. The warmth of the great Gascon's manner cleared away all clouds, and won the approval of Frederick William.

There was signed the famous compact, or plan, of Trachenberg (July 12th). It bound the allies to turn their main forces against Napoleon's chief army, wherever it was: those allied corps that threatened his flanks or communications were to act on the line that most directly cut into them: and the salient bastion of Bohemia was ex-

[1] Thornton's despatch of July 12th ("Castlereagh Papers," 2nd Series, vol. iv., *ad fin.*).

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 383 and 405.

pressly named as offering the greatest advantages for attacking Napoleon's main force. The first and third of these axioms were directly framed so as to encourage Austria : the second aimed at concentrating Bernadotte's force on the main struggle and preventing his waging war merely against Denmark.

The plan went even further : 100,000 allied troops were to be sent into Bohemia, as soon as the armistice should cease, so as to form in all an army of 200,000 men. On the north, Bernadotte, after detaching a corps towards Hamburg, was to advance with a Russo-Prusso-Swedish army of 70,000 men towards the middle course of the Elbe, his objective being Leipzig ; and the rest of the allied forces, those remaining in Silesia, were to march towards Torgau, and thus threaten Napoleon's positions in Saxony from the East. This plan of campaign was an immense advance on those of the earlier coalitions. There was no reliance here on lines and camps : the days of Mack and Phull were past : the allies had at last learnt from Napoleon the need of seeking out the enemy's chief army, and of flinging at it all the available forces. Politically, also, the compact deserves notice. In concerting a plan of offensive operations from Bohemia, the allies were going far to determine the conduct of Austria.

On that same day the peace Congress was opened at Prague. Its proceedings were farcical from the outset. Only Anstett and Humboldt, the Russian and Prussian envoys, were at hand ; and at the appointment of the former, an Alsatian by birth, Napoleon expressed great annoyance. The difficulties about the armistice also gave him the opportunity, which he undoubtedly sought, of further delaying negotiations. In vain did Metternich point out to the French envoy, Narbonne, at Prague, that these frivolous delays must lead to war if matters were not amicably settled by August 10th, at midnight.[1] In

[1] For details see Oncken, Luckwaldt, Thiers, Fain, and the "Mems." of the Duc de Broglie ; also Gentz, "Briefe an Pilat," of July 16th–22nd, 1813. Humboldt, the Prussian ambassador, reported on July 13th to Berlin that Metternich looked on war as quite unavoidable, and on the Congress merely as a means of convincing the Emperor Francis of the impossibility of gaining a lasting peace.

vain did Narbonne and Caulaincourt beg their master to seize this opportunity for concluding a safe and honourable peace. It was not till the middle of July that he appointed them his plenipotentiaries at the Congress ; and, even then, he retained the latter at Dresden, while the former fretted in forced inaction at Prague. "I send you more *powers* than *power*," wrote Maret to Narbonne with cynical jauntiness : "you will have your hands tied, but your legs and mouth free so that you may walk about and dine."[1] At last, on the 26th, Caulaincourt received his instructions ; but what must have been the anguish of this loyal son of France to see that Napoleon was courting war with a united Europe. Austria, said his master, was acting as mediator : and the mediator ought not to look for gains : she had made no sacrifice and deserved to gain nothing at all : her claims were limitless ; and every concession granted by France would encourage her to ask for more : he was disposed to make peace with Russia on satisfactory terms so as to punish Austria for her bad faith in breaking the alliance of 1812.[2]

Such trifling with the world's peace seems to belong, not to the sphere of history, but to the sombre domain of Greek tragedy, where mortals full blown with pride rush blindly on the embossed bucklers of fate. For what did Austria demand of him? She proposed to leave him master of all the lands from the swamps of the Ems down to the Roman Campagna : Italy was to be his, along with as much of the Iberian Peninsula as he could hold. His control of Illyria, North Germany, and the Rhenish Confederation he must give up. But France, Belgium, Holland, and Italy would surely form a noble realm for a man who had lost half a million of men, and was even now losing Spain. Yet his correspondence proves that, even so, he thought little of his foes, and, least of all, of the Congress at Prague.

Leaving his plenipotentiaries tied down to the discussion of matters of form, he set out from Dresden on July 24th for a visit to Mainz, where he met the Empress and reviewed his reserves. Every item of news fed his war-

[1] Thiers ; Ernouf's "Maret, Duc de Bassano," p. 571.

[2] Bignon, "Hist. de France," vol. xii., p. 199 ; Lefebvre, "Cabinets de l'Europe," vol. v., p. 555.

like resolve. Soult, with nearly 100,000 men, was about to relieve Pamplona (so he wrote to Caulaincourt) : the English were retiring in confusion : 12,000 veteran horsemen from his armies in Spain would soon be on the Rhine ; but they could not be on the Elbe before September. If the allies wanted a longer armistice, he (Napoleon) would agree to it : if they wished to fight, he was equally ready, even against the Austrians as well.[1] To Davoust, at Hamburg, he expressed himself as if war was certain ; and he ordered Clarke, at Paris, to have 110,000 muskets made by the end of the year, so that, in all, 400,000 would be ready. Letters about the Congress are conspicuous by their absence ; and everything proves that, as he wrote to Clarke at the beginning of the armistice, he purposed striking his great blows in September. Little by little we see the emergence of his final plan — *to overthrow Russia and Prussia, while, for a week or two, he amused Austria with separate overtures at Prague.*

But, during eight years of adversity, European statesmen had learnt that disunion spelt disaster ; and it was evident that Napoleon's delays were prompted solely by the need of equipping and training his new cavalry brigades. As for the Congress, no one took it seriously. Gentz, who was then in close contact with Metternich, saw how this tragi-comedy would end. "We believe that on his return to Dresden, Napoleon will address to this Court a solemn Note in which he will accuse everybody of the delays which he himself has caused, and will end up by proclaiming a sort of ultimatum. Our reply will be a declaration of war."[2]

This was what happened. As July wore on and brought no peaceful overtures, but rather a tightening of Napoleon's coils in Saxony, Bavaria, and Illyria, the Emperor Francis inclined towards war. As late as July 18th he wrote to Metternich that he was still for peace, provided that Illyria could be gained.[3] But the French mili-

[1] Letter of July 29th.

[2] Gentz to Sir G. Jackson, August 4th ("Bath Archives," vol. ii., p. 199). For a version flattering to Napoleon, see Ernouf's "Maret" (pp. 579–587), which certainly exculpates the Minister.

[3] Metternich, "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 546 (Eng. ed.).

tary preparations decided him, a few days later, to make war, unless every one of the Austrian demands should be conceded by August 10th. His counsellors had already come to that conclusion, as our records prove. On July 20th Stadion wrote to Cathcart urging him to give pecuniary aid to General Nugent, who would wait on him to concert means for rousing a revolt against Napoleon in Tyrol and North Italy; and our envoy agreed to give £5,000 a month for the "support of 5,000 Austrians acting in communication with our squadron in the Adriatic." This step met with Metternich's approval; and, when writing to Stadion from Prague (July 25th), he counselled Cathcart to send a despatch to Wellington and urge him to make a vigorous move against the south of France. He (Metternich) would have the letter sent safely through Switzerland and the south of France direct to our general.[1]

With the solemn triflings of the Congress we need not concern ourselves. The French plenipotentiaries saw clearly that their master "would allow of no peace but that which he should himself dictate with his foot on the enemy's neck." Yet they persevered in their thankless task, for "who could tell whether the Emperor, when he found himself placed between highly favourable conditions and the fear of having 200,000 additional troops against him, might not hesitate; whether just one grain of common sense, one spark of wisdom, might not enter his head?" Alas! That brain was now impervious to advice; and the young De Broglie, from whom we quote this extract, sums up the opinion of the French plenipotentiaries in the trenchant phrase, "the devil was in him."[2]

But there was method in his madness. In the Dresden interview he had warned Metternich that not till the eleventh hour would he disclose his real demands. And now was the opportunity of trying the effect of a final act of intimidation. On August 4th he was back again in Dresden: on the next day he dictated the secret con-

[1] "F. O.," Russia, No. 86. A letter of General Nugent (July 27th), from Prague, is inclosed. When he (N.) expressed to Metternich the fear that Caulaincourt's arrival there portended peace, M. replied that this would make no alteration, "as the proposals were such that they certainly would not be accepted, and they would even be augmented."

[2] "Souvenirs du Duc de Broglie," vol. i., ch. v.

ditions on which he would accept Austria's mediation ; and, on August 6th, Caulaincourt paid Metternich a private visit to find out what Austria's terms really were. After a flying visit to the Emperor Francis at Brandeis, the Minister brought back as an ultimatum the six terms drawn up on June 7th (see p. 290) ; and to these he now added another which guaranteed the existing possessions of every State, great or small.

Napoleon was taken aback by this boldness, which he attributed to the influence of Spanish affairs and to English intrigues.[1] On August 9th he summoned Bubna and offered to give up the Duchy of Warsaw — provided that the King of Saxony gained an indemnity — also the Illyrian Provinces (but without Istria), as well as Danzig, if its fortifications were destroyed. As for the Hanse Towns and North Germany, he would not hear of letting them go. Bubna thought that Austria would acquiesce. But she had said her last word : she saw that Napoleon was trifling with her until he had disposed of Russia and Prussia. And, at midnight of August 10th, beacon fires on the heights of the Riesengebirge flashed the

[1] British aims at this time are well set forth in the instructions and the accompanying note to Lord Aberdeen, our ambassador designate at Vienna, dated Foreign Office, August 6th, 1813 : ". . . Your Lordship will collect from these instructions that a general peace, in order to provide adequately for the tranquillity and independence of Europe, ought, in the judgment of His Majesty's Government, to confine France at least within the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the Rhine : and if the other Great Powers of Europe should feel themselves enabled to contend for such a Peace, Great Britain is fully prepared to concur with them in such a line of policy. If, however, the Powers most immediately concerned should determine, rather than encounter the risks of a more protracted struggle, to trust for their own security to a more imperfect arrangement, it never has been the policy of the British Government to attempt to dictate to other States a perseverance in war, which they did not themselves recognize to be essential to their own as well as to the common safety." As regards details, we desired to see the restoration of Venetia to Austria, of the Papal States to the Pope, of the north-west of Italy to the King of Sardinia, but trusted that "a liberal establishment" might be found for Murat in the centre of Italy. Napoleon knew that we desired to limit France to the "natural frontiers," and that we were resolved to insist on our maritime claims. As our Government took this unpopular line, and went further than Austria in its plans for restricting French influence, he had an excellent opportunity for separating the Continental Powers from us. But he gave out that those Powers were bought by England, and that we were bent on humiliating France.

glad news to the allies in Silesia that they might begin to march their columns into Bohemia. The second and vaster Act in the drama of liberation had begun.

Did Napoleon remember, in that crisis of his destiny, that it was exactly twenty-one years since the downfall of the old French monarchy, when he looked forth on the collapse of the royalist defence at the Tuileries and the fruitless bravery of the Swiss Guards?

CHAPTER XXXV

DRESDEN AND LEIPZIG

The militant Revolution had now attained its majority. It had to confront an embattled Europe. Hitherto the jealousies or fears of the Eastern Powers had prevented any effective union. The Austro-Prussian league of 1792 was of the loosest description owing to the astute neutrality of the Czarina Catherine. In 1798 and 1805 Prussia seemed to imitate her policy, and only after Austria had been crushed did the army of Frederick the Great try conclusions with Napoleon. In the Jena and Friedland campaigns, the Hapsburgs played the part of the sulking Achilles, and met their natural reward in 1809. The war of 1812 marshalled both Austria and Prussia as vassal States in Napoleon's crusade against Russia. But it also brought salvation, and Napoleon's fateful obstinacy during the negotiations at Prague virtually compelled his own father-in-law to draw the sword against him. Ostensibly, the points at issue were finally narrowed down to the control of the Confederation of the Rhine, the ownership of North Germany, and a few smaller points. But really there was a deeper cause, the character of Napoleon.

The vindictiveness with which he had trampled on his foes, his almost superhuman lust of domination, and the halting way in which he met all overtures for a compromise — this it was that drove the Hapsburgs into an alliance with their traditional foes. His conduct may be explained on diverse grounds, as springing from the vendetta instincts of his race, or from his still viewing events through the distorting medium of the Continental System, or from his ingrained conviction that, at bottom, rulers are influenced only by intimidation.

In any case, he had now succeeded in bringing about the very thing which Charles James Fox had declared to

be impossible. In opening the negotiations for peace with France in April, 1806, our Foreign Minister had declared to Talleyrand that "the project of combining the whole of Europe against France is to the last degree chimerical." Yet Great Britain and the Spanish patriots, after struggling alone against the conqueror from 1808 to 1812, saw Russia, Sweden, Prussia, and Austria, successively range themselves on their side. It is true, the Germans of the Rhenish Confederation, the Italians, Swiss, and Danes, were still enrolled under the banners of the new Charlemagne ; but, with the exception of the last, they fought wearily or questioningly, as for a cause that promised naught but barren triumphs and unending strife.

Truly, the years that witnessed Napoleon's fall were fruitful in paradox. The greatest political genius of the age, for lack of the saving grace of moderation, had banded Europe against him : and the most calculating of commanders had also given his enemies time to frame an effective military combination. The Prussian General von Boyen has told us in his Memoirs how dismayed ardent patriots were at the conclusion of the armistice in June, and how slow even the wiser heads were to see that it would benefit their cause. If Napoleon needed it in order to train his raw conscripts and organize new brigades of cavalry, the need of the allies was even greater. Their resources were far less developed than his own. At Bautzen, their army was much smaller ; and Boyen states that had the Emperor pushed them hard, driven the Russians back into Poland and called the Poles once more to arms, the allies must have been in the most serious straits.[1]

Napoleon, it is true, gained much by the armistice. His conscripts profited immensely by the training of those nine weeks : his forces now threatened Austria on the side of Bavaria and Illyria, as well as from the newly intrenched camp south of Dresden : his cavalry was recovering its old efficiency : Murat, in answer to his imperious summons, ended his long vacillations and joined the army at Dresden on August 14th.

Above all, the French now firmly held that great military barrier, the River Elbe. Napoleon's obstinacy during

[1] Boyen, "Erinnerungen," Pt. III., p. 66.

the armistice was undoubtedly fed by his boundless confidence in the strength of his military position. In vain did his Marshals remind him that he was dangerously far from France; that, if Austria drew the sword, she could cut him off from the Rhine, and that the Saale, or even the Rhine itself, would be a safer line of defence. — Ten battles lost, he retorted, would scarcely force him to that last step. True, he now exposed his line of communications with France; but if the art of war consisted in never running any risk, glory would be the prize of mediocre minds. He must have a complete triumph. The question was not of abandoning this or that province: his political superiority was at stake. At Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram, he was in greater danger. His forces now were not *in the air;* they rested on the Elbe, on its fortresses, and on Erfurt. Dresden was the pivot on which all his movements turned. His enemies were spread out on a circumference stretching from Prague to Berlin, while he was at the centre; and, operating on interior and therefore shorter lines, he could outmarch and outmanœuvre them. "*But*," he concluded, "*where I am not my lieutenants must wait for me without trusting anything to chance.* The allies cannot long act together on lines so extended, and can I not reasonably hope sooner or later to catch them in some false move? If they venture between my fortified lines of the Elbe and the Rhine, I will enter Bohemia and thus take them in the rear."[1]

The plan promised much. The central intrenched camps of Dresden and Pirna, together with the fortresses of Königstein above, and of Torgau below, the Saxon capital, gave great strategic advantages. The corps of St. Cyr at Königstein and those of Vandamme, Poniatowski, and Victor further to the east, watched the defiles leading from Bohemia. The corps of Macdonald, Lauriston, Ney, and Marmont held in check Blücher's army of Silesia. On Napoleon's left, and resting on the fortresses of Wittenberg and Magdeburg, the corps of Oudinot, Bertrand, and Reynier threatened Berlin and Bernadotte's army of the north cantonned in its neighbourhood; while

[1] Fain, vol. ii., p. 27. The italicized words are given thus by him; but they read like a later excuse for Napoleon's failures.

Davoust at Hamburg faced Bernadotte's northern detachments and menaced his communications with Stralsund. Davoust certainly was far away, and the loss of this ablest of Napoleon's lieutenants was severely to be felt in the subsequent complicated moves ; with this exception, however, Napoleon's troops were well in hand and had the advantage of the central position, while the allies were, as yet, spread out on an extended arc.

But Napoleon once more made the mistake of underrating both the numbers and the abilities of his foes. By great exertions they now had close on half a million of men under arms, near the banks of the Oder and the Elbe, or advancing from Poland and Hungary. True, many of these were reserves or raw recruits, and Colonel Cathcart doubted whether the Austrian reserves were then in existence.[1] But the best authorities place the total at 496,000 men and 1,443 cannon. Moreover, as was agreed on at Trachenberg, 77,000 Russians and 49,000 Prussians now marched from Glatz and Schweidnitz into Bohemia, and speedily came into touch with the 110,000 Austrians now ranged behind the River Eger. The formation of this allied Grand Army was a masterly step. Napoleon did not hear of it before August 16th, and it was not until a week later that he realized how vast were the forces that would threaten his rear.

For the present his plan was to hold the Bohemian passes south of Bautzen and Pirna, so as to hinder any invasion of Saxony, while he threw himself in great force on the Army of Silesia, now 95,000 strong, though he believed it to number only 50,000.[2] While he was crushing Blücher, his lieutenants, Oudinot, Reynier, and Bertrand, were charged to drive Bernadotte's scattered corps from Berlin ; whereupon Davoust was to cut him off from the sea and relieve the French garrisons at Stettin and Küstrin. Thus Napoleon proposed to act on the offensive in the open country towards Berlin and in Silesia, remaining at first on the defensive at Dresden and in the Lusa-

[1] "Commentaries on the War in Russia and Germany," p. 195.

[2] In his letters of August 16th to Macdonald and Ney he assumed that the allies might strike at Dresden, or even as far west as Zwickau : but meanwhile he would march "pour enlever Blücher."

tian mountains. This was against the advice of Marmont, who urged him to strike first at Prague, and not to intrust his lieutenants with great undertakings far away from Dresden. The advice proved to be sound; but it seems certain that Napoleon intended to open the campaign by a mighty blow dealt at Blücher, and then to lead a great force through the Lusatian defiles into Bohemia and drive the allies before him towards Vienna.

But what did he presume that the allied forces in Bohemia would be doing while he overwhelmed Blücher in Silesia? Would not Dresden and his communications with France be left open to their blows? He decided to run this risk. He had 100,000 men among the Lusatian hills between Bautzen and Zittau. St. Cyr's corps was strongly posted at Pirna and the small fortress of Königstein, while his light troops watched the passes north of Teplitz and Karlsbad. If the allies sought to invade Saxony, they would, so Napoleon thought, try to force the Zittau road, which presented few natural difficulties. If they threatened Dresden by the passages further west, Vandamme would march from near Zittau to reinforce St. Cyr, or, if need be, the Emperor himself would hurry back from Silesia with his Guards. If the enemy invaded Bavaria, Napoleon wished them *bon voyage:* they would soon come back faster than they went; for, in that case, he would pour his columns down from Zittau towards Prague and Vienna. The thought that he might for a time be cut off from France troubled him not: "400,000 men," he said, "resting on a system of strongholds, on a river like the Elbe, are not to be turned." In truth, he thought little about the Bohemian army. If 40,000 Russians had entered Bohemia, they would not reach Prague till the 25th; so he wrote to St. Cyr on the 17th, the day when hostilities could first begin; and he evidently believed that Dresden would be safe till September. Its defence seemed assured by the skill of that master of defensive warfare, St. Cyr, by the barrier of the Erz Mountains, and still more by Austrian slowness.

Of this characteristic of theirs he cherished great hopes. Their finances were in dire disorder; and Fouché, who had just returned from a tour in the Hapsburg States,

reported that the best way of striking at that Power would be "to affect its paper currency, on which all its armaments depend."[1] And truly if the transport of a great army over a mountain range had depended solely on the almost bankrupt exchequer at Vienna, Dresden would have been safe until Michaelmas; but, beside the material aid brought by the Russians and Prussians into Bohemia, England also gave her financial support. In pursuance of the secret article agreed on at Reichenbach, Cathcart now advanced £250,000 at once; and the knowledge that our financial support was given to the federative paper notes issued by the allies enabled the Court of Vienna privately to raise loans and to wage war with a vigour wholly unexpected by Napoleon.[2]

Certainly the allied Grand Army suffered from no lack of advisers. The Czar, the Emperor Francis, and the King of Prussia were there; as a compliment to Austria, the command was intrusted to Field-Marshal Schwarzenberg, a man of diplomatic ability rather than of military genius. By his side were the Russians, Wittgenstein, Barclay, and Toll, the Prussian Knesebeck, the Swiss Jomini, and, above all, Moreau.

The last-named, as we have seen, came over on the inducement of Bernadotte, and was received with great honour by the allied sovereigns. Jomini also was welcomed for his knowledge of the art of war. This great writer had long served as a French general; but the ill-treatment that he had lately suffered at Berthier's hands led him, on August 14th, to quit the French service and pass over to the allies. His account of his desertion, however, makes it clear that he had not penetrated Napoleon's designs, for the best of all reasons, because the Emperor kept them to himself to the very last moment.[3]

The second part of the campaign opens with the curious

[1] "Lettres inédites de Napoléon." The Emperor forwarded this suggestion to Savary (August 11th): it doubtless meant an issue of false paper notes, such as had been circulated in Russia the year before.

[2] Cathcart, "Commentaries," p. 206.

[3] "Extrait d'un Mémoire sur la Campagne de 1813." With characteristic inaccuracy Marbot remarks that the defection of Jomini, *with Napoleon's plans*, was "a disastrous blow." The same is said by Dedem de Gelder, p. 328.

sight of immense forces, commanded by experienced leaders, acting in complete ignorance of the moves of the enemy only some fifty miles away. Leaving Bautzen on August 17th, Napoleon proceeded eastwards to Görlitz, turned off thence to Zittau, and hearing a false rumour that the Russo-Prussian force in Bohemia was only 40,000 strong, returned to Görlitz with the aim of crushing Blücher. Disputes about the armistice had given that enterprising leader the excuse for entering the neutral zone before its expiration; and he had had sharp affairs with Macdonald

and Ney near Löwenberg on the River Bober. Napoleon hurried up with his Guards, eager to catch Blücher;[1] the French were now 140,000 strong, while the allies had barely 95,000 at hand. But the Prussian veteran, usually as daring as a lion, was now wily as a fox. Under cover of stiff outpost affairs, he skilfully withdrew to the south-east, hoping to lure the French into the depths of Silesia and so give time to Schwarzenberg to seize Dresden.

[1] The Emperor's eagerness is seen by the fact that on August 21st he began dictating despatches, at Lauban, at 3 A.M. On the previous day he had dictated seventeen despatches; twelve at Zittau, four after his ride to Görlitz, and one more on his arrival at Lauban at midnight.

But Napoleon was not to be drawn further afield. Seeing that his foes could not be forced to a pitched battle, he intrusted the command to Macdonald, and rapidly withdrew with Ney and his Guard towards Görlitz; for he now saw the possible danger to Dresden if Schwarzenberg struck home. If, however, that leader remained on the defensive, the Emperor determined to fall back on what had all along been his second plan, and make a rush through the Lusatian defiles on Prague.[1] But a despatch from St. Cyr, which reached him at Görlitz late at night on the 23rd, showed that Dresden was in serious danger from the gathering masses of the allies. This news consigned his second plan to the limbo of vain hopes. Yet, as will appear a little later, his determination to defend by taking the offensive soon took form in yet a third design for the destruction of the allies.

It is a proof of the quenchless pugnacity of his mind that he framed this plan during the fatigues of the long forced march back towards Dresden, amidst pouring rain and the discouragement of knowing that his raid into Silesia had ended merely in the fruitless wearying of his choicest troops. Accompanied by the Old Guard, the Young Guard, a division of infantry, and Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, he arrived at Stolpen, south-east of Dresden, before dawn of the 25th. Most of the battalions had traversed forty leagues in little more than forty-eight hours, and that, too, after a partial engagement at Löwenberg and despite lack of regular rations. Leaving him for a time, we turn to glance at the fortunes of the war in Brandenburg and Silesia.

Napoleon had bidden Oudinot, with his own corps and those of Reynier and Bertrand, in all about 70,000 men, to fight his way to Berlin, disperse the Landwehr and the "mad rabble" there, and, if the city resisted, set it in flames by the fire of fifty howitzers. That Marshal found that a tough resistance awaited him, although the allied commander-in-chief, Bernadotte, moved with the utmost caution, as if he were bent on justifying Napoleon's recent sneer that he would "only make a show" (*piaffer*). It is true that the position of the Swedish Prince, with Davoust

[1] Letters of August 23rd to Berthier.

threatening his rear, was far from safe ; but he earned the dislike of the Prussians by playing the *grand seigneur*.[1] Meanwhile most of the defence was carried out by the Prussians, who flooded the flat marshy land, thus delaying Oudinot's advance and compelling him to divide his corps. Nevertheless, it seemed that Bernadotte was about to evacuate Berlin.

At this there was general indignation, which found vent in the retort of the Prussian General, von Bülow : "Our bones shall bleach in front of Berlin, not behind it." Seeing an opportune moment, while Oudinot's other corps were as yet far off, Bülow sharply attacked Reynier's corps of Saxons at Grossbeeren, and gained a brilliant success, taking 1,700 prisoners with 26 guns, and thus compelling Oudinot's scattered array to fall back in confusion on Wittenberg (August 23rd).[2] Thither the Crown Prince cautiously followed him. Four days later, a Prussian column of Landwehr fought a desperate fight at Hagelberg with Girard's conscripts, finally rushing on them with wolf-like fury, stabbing and clubbing them, till the foss and the lanes of the town were piled high with dead and wounded. Scarce 1,700 out of Girard's 9,000 made good their flight to Magdeburg. The failures at Grossbeeren and Hagelberg reacted unfavourably on Davoust. That leader, advancing into Mecklenburg, had skirmished with Walmoden's corps of Hanoverians, British, and Hanseatics ; but, hearing of the failure of the other attempts on Berlin, he fell back and confined himself mainly to a defensive which had never entered into the Emperor's designs on that side, or indeed on any side.

Even when Napoleon left Macdonald facing Blücher in Silesia, his orders were, not merely to keep the allies in check : if possible, Macdonald was to attack him and

[1] Boyen, vol. iii., p. 85. But see Wiehr, "Nap. und Bernadotte in 1813," who proves how risky was B.'s position, with the Oder fortresses, held by the French, on one flank, and Davoust and the Danes on the other. He disposes of many of the German slanders against Bernadotte.

[2] Häusser, pp. 260–267. Oudinot's "Memoirs" throw the blame on the slowness of Bertrand in effecting the concentration on Grossbeeren and on the heedless impetuosity of Reynier. Wiehr (pp. 74–116) proves from despatches that Bernadotte meant to attack the French *south of Berlin:* he discredits the "bones" anecdote.

drive him beyond the town of Jauer.[1] This was what the French Marshal attempted to do on the 26th of August. The conditions seemed favourable to a surprise. Blücher's army was stationed amidst hilly country deeply furrowed by the valleys of the Katzbach and the "raging Neisse."[2] Less than half of the allied army of 95,000 men was composed of Prussians: the Russians naturally obeyed his orders with some reluctance, and even his own countryman, Yorck, grudgingly followed the behests of the "hussar general."

Macdonald also hoped to catch the allies while they were sundered by the deep valley of the Neisse. The Prussians with the Russian corps led by Sacken were to the east of the Neisse near the village of Eichholz, the central point of the plateau north of Jauer, which was the objective of the French right wing; while Langeron's Russian corps was at Hennersdorf, some three miles away and on the west of that torrent. On his side, Blücher was planning an attack on Macdonald, when he heard that the French had crossed the Neisse near its confluence with the Katzbach, and were struggling up the streaming gullies that led to Eichholz.

Driving rain-storms hid the movements on both sides, and as Souham, who led the French right, had neglected to throw out flanking scouts, the Prussian staff-officer, Müffling, was able to ride within a short distance of the enemy's columns and report to his chief that they could be assailed before their masses were fully deployed on the plateau. While Souham's force was still toiling up, Sacken's artillery began to ply it with shot, and had Yorck charged quickly with his corps of Prussians, the day might have been won forthwith. But that opinionated general insisted on leisurely deploying his men. Souham was therefore able to gain a foothold on the plateau: Sebastiani's men dragged up twenty-four light cannon: and at times the devoted bravery of the French endangered the defence. But the defects in their position slowly but surely told against them, and the vigour of their attack spent itself. Their cavalry was exhausted

[1] Letters of August 23rd.

[2] So called to distinguish it from the two other Neisses in Silesia.

by the mud: their muskets were rendered wellnigh useless by the ceaseless rain; and when Blücher late in the afternoon headed a dashing charge of Prussian and Russian horsemen, the wearied conscripts gave way, fled pell-mell down the slopes, and made for the fords of the Neisse and the Katzbach, where many were engulfed by the swollen waters. Meanwhile the Russians on the allied left barely kept off Lauriston's onsets, and on that side the day ended in a drawn fight. Macdonald, however, seeing Lauriston's rear threatened by the advance of the Prussians over the Katzbach, retreated during the night with all his forces. On the next few days, the allies, pressing on his wearied and demoralized troops, completed their discomfiture, so that Blücher, on the 1st of September, was able thus to sum up the results of the battle and the pursuit — two eagles, 103 cannon, 18,000 men, and a vast quantity of ammunition and stores captured, and Silesia entirely freed from the foe.[1]

We now return to the events that centred at Dresden. When, on August 21st and 22nd, the allies wound their way through the passes of the Erz, they were wholly ignorant of Napoleon's whereabouts. The generals, Jomini and Toll, who were acquainted with the plan of operations, agree in stating that the aim of the allies was to seize Leipzig. The latter asserts that they believed Napoleon to be there, while the Swiss strategist saw in this movement merely a means of effecting a junction with Bernadotte's army, so as to cut off Napoleon from the Rhine.[2] Unaware that the rich prize of Dresden was left almost within their grasp by Napoleon's eastward move, the allies plodded on towards Freiberg and Chemnitz, when, on the 23rd, the capture of one of St. Cyr's despatches flashed the truth upon them.

At once they turned eastwards towards Dresden; but so slow was their progress over the wretched cross-roads now cut up by the rains, that not till the early morn-

[1] Blasendorf's "Blücher"; Müffling's "Aus meinem Leben" and "Campaigns of the Silesian Army in 1813 and 1814"; Bertin's "La Campagne de 1813." Häusser assigns to the French close on 60,000 at the battle; to the allies about 70,000.

[2] Jomini, "Vie de Napoléon," vol. iv., p. 380; "Toll," vol. iii., p. 124.

ing of the 25th did the heads of their columns appear on the heights south-west of the Saxon capital. Yet, even so, the omens were all in their favour. On their right, Wittgenstein had already carried the French lines at Pirna, and was now driving in St. Cyr's outposts towards Dresden. The daring spirits at Schwarzenberg's headquarters therefore begged him to push on the advantage already gained, while Napoleon was still far away. Everything, they asserted, proved that the French were surprised: Dresden could not long hold out against an attack by superior numbers: its position in a river valley dominated by the southern and western slopes, which the allies strongly held, was fatal to a prolonged defence: the thirteen redoubts hastily thrown up by the French could not long keep an army at bay, and of these only five were on the left side of the Elbe on which the allies were now encamped.

Against these manly counsels the voice of prudence pleaded for delay. It was not known how strong were St. Cyr's forces in Dresden and in the intrenched camp south of the city. Would it not therefore be better to await the development of events? Such was the advice of Toll and Moreau, the latter warning the Czar, with an earnestness which we may deem fraught with destiny for himself — "Sire, if we attack, we shall lose 20,000 men and break our nose."[1] The multitude of counsellors did not tend to safety. Distracted by the strife of tongues, Schwarzenberg finally took refuge in that last resort of weak minds, a tame compromise. He decided to wait until further corps reached the front, and at four o'clock of the following afternoon *to push forward five columns for a general reconnaissance in force*. As Jomini has pointed out, this plan rested on sheer confusion of thought. If the commander meant merely to find out the strength of the defenders, that could be ascertained at once by sending

[1] "Toll," vol. iii., p. 144. Cathcart reports (p. 216) that Moreau remarked to him: "We are already on Napoleon's communications; the possession of the town [Dresden] is no object; it will fall of itself at a future time." If Moreau said this seriously it can only be called a piece of imbecility. The allies were far from safe until they had wrested from Napoleon one of his strong places on the Elbe; it was certainly not enough to have seized Pirna.

forward light troops, screened by skirmishers, at the important points. If he wished to attack in force, his movement was timed too late in the day safely to effect a lodgment in a large city held by a resolute foe. Moreover the postponement of the attack for thirty hours gave time for the French Emperor to appear on the scene with his Guards.

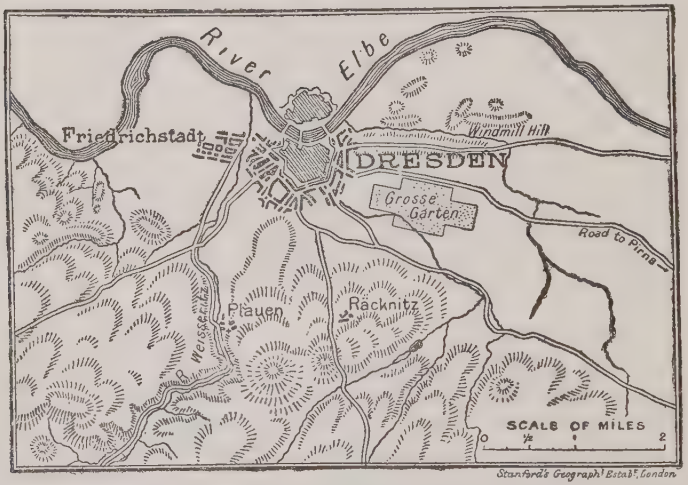
As we have seen, Napoleon reached Stolpen, a town distant some sixteen miles from Dresden, very early on the morning of the 25th. His plans present a telling contrast to the slow and clumsy arrangements of the allies. He proposed to hurl his Guards at their rear and cut them off from Bohemia. Crossing the Elbe at Königstein, he would recover the camp of Pirna, hold the plateau further west and intercept Schwarzenberg's retreat.[1] For the success of this plan he needed a day's rest for his wearied Guards and the knowledge that Dresden could hold out for a short time. His veterans could perhaps dispense with rest; where their Emperor went they would follow; but Dresden was the unknown quantity. Shortly after midnight of the 25th and 26th, he heard from St. Cyr that Dresden would soon be attacked in such force that a successful defence was doubtful.

At once he changed his plan and at 1 A.M. sent off four despatches ordering his Guards and all available troops to succour St. Cyr. Vandamme's corps alone was now charged with the task of creeping round the enemy's rear, while the Guards long before dawn resumed their march through the rain and mud. The Emperor followed and passed them at a gallop, reaching the capital at 9 A.M. with Latour-Maubourg's cuirassiers; and, early in the afternoon, the shakos of the Guards were seen on the heights east of Dresden, while the dark masses of the allies were gathering on the south and west for their reconnaissance in force.

Lowering clouds and pitiless rain robbed the scene of all brilliance, but wreathed it with a certain sombre majesty. On the one side was the fair city, the centre of German art and culture, hastily girdled with redoubts and intrenchments manned now by some 120,000 de-

[1] "Corresp.," No. 20461.

fenders. Fears and murmurings had vanished as soon as the Emperor appeared; and though in many homes men still longed for the triumph of the allies, yet loyalty to their King and awe of Napoleon held the great mass of the citizens true to his alliance. As for the French soldiery, their enthusiasm was unbounded. As regiment after regiment tramped in wearily from the east over the Elbe bridge and the men saw that well-known figure in the gray overcoat, fatigues and discomforts were forgotten; thunderous shouts of "Vive l'Empereur" rent the air and rolled along the stream, carrying inspiration



to the defenders, doubt and dismay to the hostile lines. Yet these too were being strengthened, until they finally mustered close on 200,000 men, who crowned the slopes south of Dresden with a war-cloud that promised to sweep away its hasty defences — had not Napoleon been there.

The news of his arrival shook the nerves of the Russian Emperor, and it was reserved for the usually diffident King of Prussia to combat all notion of retreat. Schwarzenberg's reconnaissance in force therefore took place punctually at four o'clock, when the French, after a brief rest, were well prepared to meet them. The

Prussians had already seized the "Great Garden" which lines the Pirna road; and from this point of vantage they now sought to drive St. Cyr from the works thrown up on its flank and rear. But their masses were torn by a deadly fire and finally fell back shattered. The Russians, on their right, fared no better. At the allied centre and left, the attack at one time promised success. Under cover of a heavy cannonade from their slopes, the Austrians carried two redoubts: but, with a desperate charge, the Old Guard drove in through the gorges of these works and bayoneted the victors of an hour. As night fell, the assailants drew off baffled, after sustaining serious losses.

Nevertheless, the miseries of the night, the heavy rains of the dawning day, and the knowledge of the strength of the enemy's position in front and of Vandamme's movement in their rear failed to daunt their spirits. If they were determined, Napoleon was radiant with hope. His force, though smaller, held the inner line and spread over some three miles; while the concave front of the allies extended over double that space, and their left wing was separated from the centre by the stream and defile of Plauen. From his inner position he could therefore readily throw an overpowering mass on any part of their attenuated array. He prepared to do so against their wings. At those points everything promised success to his methods of attack.

Never, perhaps, in all modern warfare has the musket been so useless as amidst the drenching rains which beat upon the fighters at the Katzbach and before Dresden. So defective was its firing arrangement then that after a heavy storm only a feeble sputter came from whole battalions of foot: and on those two eventful days the honours lay with the artillery and *l'arme blanche*. As for the infantrymen, they could effect little except in some wild snatches of bayonet work at close quarters. This explains the course of events both at the Katzbach on the 26th, and at Dresden on the following day. The allied centre was too strongly posted on the slopes south of Dresden to be assailed with much hope of success. But, against the Russian vanguard on the allied right, Napo-

leon launched Mortier's corps and Nansouty's cavalry with complete success, until Wittgenstein's masses on the heights stayed the French onset. Along the centre, some thousand cannon thundered against one another, but with no very noteworthy result, save that Moreau had his legs carried away by a shot from a field battery that suddenly opened upon the Czar's suite. It was the first shot that dealt him this fatal wound, but several other balls fell among the group until Alexander and his staff moved away.

Meanwhile the great blow was struck by Napoleon at the allied left. There the Austrian wing was sundered from the main force by the difficult defile of Plauen; and it was crushed by one of the Emperor's most brilliant combinations. Directing Victor with 20,000 men of all arms to engage the white-coats in front, he bade Murat, with 10,000 horsemen, steal round near the bank of the Elbe and charge their flank and rear. The division of Count Metzko bore the brunt of this terrible onset. Nobly it resisted. Though not one musket in fifty would fire, the footmen in one place beat off two charges of Latour-Maubourg's cuirassiers, until he headed his line with lancers, who mangled their ranks and opened a way for the sword.[1] Then all was slaughter; and as Murat's squadrons raged along their broken lines, 10,000 footmen, cut off from the main body, laid down their arms. News of this disaster on the left and the sound of Vandamme's cannon thundering among the hills west of Pirna decided the allied sovereigns and Schwarzenberg to prepare for a timely retreat into Bohemia. Yet so bold a front did they keep at the centre and right that the waning light showed the combatants facing each other there on even terms.

During the night, the rumbling of wagons warned Marmont's scouts that the enemy were retreating;[2] and

[1] Cathcart's "Commentaries," p. 230; Bertin, "La Campagne de 1813," p. 109; Marmont, "Mems.," bk. xvii.; Sir Evelyn Wood's "Achievements of Cavalry."

[2] It is clear from Napoleon's letters of the evening of the 27th that he was not quite pleased with the day's work, and thought the enemy would hold firm, or even renew the attack on the morrow. They disprove Thiers' wild statements about a general pursuit on that evening, thousands of prisoners swept up, etc.

the Emperor, coming up at break of day, ordered that Marshal and St. Cyr to press directly on their rear, while Murat pursued the fugitives along the Freiburg road further to the west. The outcome of these two days of fighting was most serious for the allies. They lost 35,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners — a natural result of their neglect to seize Fortune's bounteous favours on the 25th ; a result, too, of Napoleon's rapid movements and unerring sagacity in profiting by the tactical blunders of his foes.

It was the last of his great victories. And even here the golden fruit which he hoped to cull crumbled to bitter dust in his grasp. As has been pointed out, he had charged General Vandamme, one of the sternest fighters in the French army, to undertake with 38,000 men a task which he himself had previously hoped to achieve with more than double that number. This was to seize Pirna and the plateau to the west, which commands the three roads leading towards Teplitz in Bohemia. The best of these roads crosses the Erzgebirge by way of Nollendorf and the gorge leading down to Kulm, the other by the Zinnwald pass, while between them is a third and yet more difficult track. Vandamme was to take up a position west or south-west of Pirna, so as to cut off the retreat of the foe.

Accordingly, he set out from Stolpen at dawn of the 26th, and on the next two days fought his way far round the rear of the allied Grand Army. A Russian force of 14,000 men, led by the young Prince Eugène of Würtemberg and Count Ostermann, sought in vain to stop his progress : though roughly handled on the 28th by the French, the Muscovites disengaged themselves, fell back ever fighting to the Nollendorf pass, and took up a strong position behind the village of Kulm. There they received timely support from the forces of the Czar and Frederick William, who, after crossing by the Zinnwald pass, heard the firing on the east and divined the gravity of the crisis. Unless they kept Vandamme at bay, the Grand Army could with difficulty struggle through into Bohemia. But now, with the supports hastily sent him, Ostermann finally beat back Vandamme's utmost efforts. The

defenders little knew what favours fortune had in store.

A Prussian corps under Kleist was slowly plodding up the middle of the three defiles, when, at noonday of the 29th, an order came from the King to hurry over the ridge and turn east to the support of Ostermann. This was impossible: the defile was choked with wagons and artillery: but one of Kleist's staff-officers proposed the daring plan of plunging at once into cross tracks and cutting into Vandamme's rear. This novel and romantic design was carried out. While, then, the French general was showering his blows against the allies below Kulm, the Prussians swarmed down from the heights of Nollendorf on his rear. Even so, the French struggled stoutly for liberty. Their leader, scorning death or surrender, flung himself with his braves on the Russians in front, but was borne down and caught, fighting to the last. Several squadrons rushed up the steeps against the Prussians and in part hewed their way through. Four thousand footmen held their own on a natural stronghold until their bullets failed, and the survivors surrendered. Many more plunged into the woods and met various fates, some escaping through to their comrades, others falling before Kleist's rearguard. Such was the disaster of Kulm. Apart from the unbending heroism shown by the conquered, it may be called the Caudine Forks of modern war. A force of close on 40,000 men was nearly destroyed: it lost all its cannon and survived only in bands of exhausted stragglers.[1]

Who is to be blamed for this disaster? Obviously, it could not have occurred had Vandamme kept in touch with the nearest French divisions: otherwise, these could have closed in on Kleist's rear and captured him. Napoleon clearly intended to support Vandamme by the corps of St. Cyr, who, early on the 28th, was charged to cooperate with that general, while Mortier covered Pirna. But on that same morning the Emperor rode to Pirna, found that St. Cyr, Marmont, and Murat were sweeping

[1] Vandamme on the 28th received a reinforcement of eighteen battalions, and thenceforth had in all sixty-four; yet Marbot credits him with only 20,000 men.

in crowds of prisoners, and directed Berthier to order Vandamme to "penetrate into Bohemia and overwhelm the Prince of Würtemberg."[1] Then, without waiting to organize the pursuit, he forthwith returned to Dresden, either because, as some say, the rains of the previous days had struck a chill to his system, or as Marmont, with more reason, asserts, because of his concern at the news of Macdonald's disaster on the Katzbach. Certain it is that he recalled his Old Guard to Dresden, busied himself with plans for a march on Berlin, and at 5.30 next morning directed Berthier to order St. Cyr to "pursue the foe to Maxen and in all directions that he has taken." This order led St. Cyr westwards, in pursuit of Barclay's Russians, who had diverged sharply in that direction in order to escape Vandamme.

The eastern road to Teplitz was thus left comparatively clear, while the middle road was thronged with pursuers and pursued.[2] No directions were given by Napoleon to warn Vandamme of the gap thus left in his rear: neither was Mortier at Pirna told to press on and keep in touch with Vandamme now that St. Cyr was some eight miles away to the west. Doubtless St. Cyr and Mortier ought to have concerted measures for keeping in touch with Vandamme, and they deserve censure for their lack of foresight; but it was not usual, even for the Marshals, to take the initiative when the Emperor was near at hand. To sum up: the causes of Vandamme's disaster were, firstly, his rapid rush into Bohemia in quest of the Marshal's bâton which was to be his guerdon of victory: secondly, the divergence of St. Cyr westward in pursuance of Napoleon's order of the 29th to pursue the enemy towards Maxen: thirdly, the neglect of St. Cyr and Mortier to concert measures for the support of Vandamme along the Nollendorf road: but, above all, the return of

[1] Thiers gives Berthier's despatch in full. See also map, p. 309.

[2] Marmont, bk. xvii., p. 158. He and St. Cyr ("Mems.," vol. iv., pp. 120–123) agree as to the confusion of their corps when crowded together on this road. Napoleon's aim was to insure the capture of all the enemy's cannon and stores; but his hasty orders had the effect of blocking the pursuit on the middle road. St. Cyr sent to headquarters for instruction; but these were now removed to Dresden; hence the fatal delay.

Napoleon to Dresden, and his neglect to secure a timely co-operation of his forces along the eastern line of pursuit.[1]

The disaster at Kulm ruined Napoleon's campaign. While Vandamme was making his last stand, his master at Dresden was drawing up a long Note as to the respective advantages of a march on Berlin or on Prague. He decided on the former course, which would crush the national movement in Prussia, and bring him into touch with Davoust and the French garrisons at Küstrin and Stettin. "Then, if Austria begins her follies again, I shall be at Dresden with a united army."

He looked on Austria as cowed by the blows dealt her south of Dresden, which would probably bring her to sue for peace, and he hoped that one more great battle would end the war. The mishaps to Macdonald and Vandamme dispelled these dreams. Still, with indomitable energy, he charged Ney to take command of Oudinot's army (a post of which this unfortunate leader begged to be relieved) and to strike at Berlin. He ordered Friant with a column of the Old Guard to march to Bautzen and drive in Macdonald's stragglers with the butt ends of muskets.[2] Then, hearing how pressing was the danger of this Marshal, he himself set out secretly with the cavalry of the Guard in hope of crushing Blücher. But again that leader retreated (September 4th and 5th), and once more the allied Grand Army thrust its columns through the Erz and threatened Dresden. Hurrying back in the worst of humours to defend that city, Napoleon heard bad news from the north. On September 6th Ney had been badly beaten at Dennewitz. In truth, that brave

[1] Thiers has shown that Mortier did not get the order from Berthier to support Vandamme *until August 30th.* The same is true of St. Cyr, who did not get it till 11.30 A.M. on that day. St. Cyr's best defence is Napoleon's letter of September 1st to him ("Lettres inédites de Napoléon"): "That unhappy Vandamme, who seems to have killed himself, had not a sentinel on the mountains, nor a reserve anywhere. . . . I had given him positive orders to intrench himself on the heights, to encamp his troops on them, and only to send isolated parties of men into Bohemia to worry the enemy and collect news." With this compare Napoleon's approving statement of August 29th to Murat ("Corresp.," No. 20486): "Vandamme was marching on Teplitz *with all his corps.*"

[2] "Lettres inédites de Napoléon," September 3rd.

fighter was no tactician : his dispositions were worse than those of Oudinot, and the obstinate bravery of the Prussians, led by Bülow and Tauenzien, wrested a victory from superior numbers. Night alone saved Ney's army from complete dissolution : as it was, he lost some 9,000 killed and wounded, 15,000 prisoners along with eighty cannon, and frankly summed up the situation thus to his master : "I have been totally beaten, and still do not know whether my army has reassembled." [1] Ultimately his army assembled and fell back behind the Elbe at Torgau.

Thus in a fortnight (August 23rd–September 6th), Napoleon had gained a great success at Dresden, while, on the circumference of operations, his lieutenants had lost five battles — Grossbeeren, Hagelberg, Katzbach, Kulm, and Dennewitz. The allies could therefore contract that circumference, come into closer touch, and threaten his central intrenched camps at Pirna and Dresden. Yet still, in pursuance of a preconcerted plan, they drew back where he advanced in person. Thus, when he sought to drive back Schwarzenberg's columns into Bohemia, that leader warily retired to the now impregnable passes ; and the Emperor fell back on Dresden, wearied and perplexed. As he said to Marmont : "The chess-board is very confused : it is only I who can know where I am." Yet once more he plunged into the Erzgebirge, engaged in a fruitless skirmish in the defile above Kulm, and again had to lead his troops back to Pirna and Dresden. A third move against Blücher led to the same wearisome result.

The allies, having worn down the foe, planned a daring move. Blücher persuaded the allied sovereigns to strike from Bohemia at Leipzig, thus turning the flank of the defensive works that the French had thrown up south of Dresden, and cutting their communications with France. He himself would march north-west, join the northern army, and thereafter meet them at Leipzig. This ren-

[1] Häusser, vol. iv., p. 343, and Boyen, "Erinnerungen," vol. ii., pp. 345–357, for Bernadotte's suspicious delays on this day ; also Marmont, bk. xviii., for a critique on Ney. Napoleon sent for Lejeune, then leading a division of Ney's army, to explain the disaster ; but when Lejeune reached the headquarters at Dohna, south of Dresden, the Emperor bade him instantly return, a proof of his impatience and anger at these reverses.

dezvous he kept, as later he staunchly kept troth with Wellington at Waterloo; and we may detect here, as in 1815, the strategic genius of Gneisenau as the prime motive force.

Leaving a small force to screen his former positions at Bautzen, the veteran, with 65,000 men, stealthily set out on his flank march towards Wittenberg, threw two pontoon bridges over the Elbe at Wartenburg, about ten miles above that fortress, drove away Bertrand's battalions who hindered the crossing, and threw up earthworks to protect the bridges (October 3rd). This done, he began to feel about for Bernadotte, and came into touch with him south of Dessau. By this daring march he placed two armies, amounting to 160,000 men, on the north of Napoleon's lines; and his personal influence checked, even if it did not wholly stop, the diplomatic loiterings of the Swedish Crown Prince.[1] Bernadotte's hesitations were finally overcome by the news that Blücher was marching south towards Leipzig. Finally he gave orders to follow him; but we may judge how easy would have been the task of overthrowing Bernadotte's discordant array if Napoleon could have carried out his project of September 30th.

As it was, the disaster of Kulm kept the Emperor tethered for some days within a few leagues of Dresden, while Bülow and Blücher saved the campaign for the allies in the north, thereby exciting a patriotic ferment which drove Jerome Bonaparte from Cassel and kept Davoust to the defensive around Hamburg. There the skilful moves of Walmoden with a force of Russians, British, Swedes, and North Germans kept in check the ablest of the French Marshals, and prevented his junction with the Emperor, for which the latter never ceased to struggle.

Meanwhile the Grand Army of the allies, strengthened by the approach from Poland of 50,000 Russians of the Army of Reserve, was creeping through the western passes of the Erz into the plains south of Leipzig. This move was not unexpected by Napoleon. The importance

[1] Thornton, our envoy at Bernadotte's headquarters, wrote to Castlereagh that that leader's desire was to spare the Swedish corps; he expected that Bernadotte would aim at the French crown ("Castlereagh Papers," 3rd series, vol. i., pp. 48–59). See too Boyen, vol. ii., p. 378.

of that city was obvious. Situated in the midst of the fertile Saxon plain, the centre of a great system of roads, its position and its wealth alike marked it out as the place likely to be seized by a daring foe who should seek to cut Napoleon off from France.

As fortune turned against him, he became ever more nervous about Leipzig. Yet, for the present, the northward march of Blücher riveted his attention. It puzzled him. Even as late as October 2nd he had not fathomed Blücher's real aim.[1] But four days later he heard that the Prussian leader had crossed the Elbe. At once he hurried north-west with the Guard to crush him, and to resume the favourite project of threatening Berlin and joining hands with Davoust. Charging St. Cyr with the defence of Dresden, and Murat with the defence of Leipzig, he took his stand at Düben, a small town on the Mulde, nearly midway between Leipzig and Wittenberg. Thence he reinforced Ney's army, and ordered that Marshal northwards to fall on the rear of Bernadotte and Blücher; while he himself waited in a moated castle at Düben to learn the issue of events.

The Saxon Colonel, von Odeleben, has left us a vivid picture of the great man's restlessness during those four days. Surrounded by maps and despatches, and waited on by his watchful geographer and apprehensive secretary, he spent much of the time scrawling large letters on a sheet of paper, uneasily listening for the tramp of a courier. In truth, few days of his life were more critical than those spent amidst the rains, swamps, and fogs of Düben. Could he have caught Bernadotte and Blücher far apart, he might have overwhelmed them singly, and then have carried the war into the heart of Prussia. But he knows that Dresden and Leipzig are far from safe. The news from that side begins to alarm him: and though, on the north, Ney, Bertrand, and Reynier

[1] Thiers asserts that he had. But if so, how could the Emperor have written to Macdonald (October 2nd) that the Silesian army had made a move on Grossenhain: "It appears that this is so as to attack the intrenched camp [at Dresden] by the side of the plain, by the roads of Berlin and Meissen"? On the same day he scoffs at Lefebvre-Desnoëttes for writing that Bernadotte had crossed the Elbe, and retorts that if he had, it would be so much the worse for him: the war would soon be over.

cut up the rearguard of the allies, he learns with some disquiet that Blücher is withdrawing westwards behind the River Saale, a move which betokens a wish to come into touch with Schwarzenberg near Leipzig.

Yet this disconcerting thought spurs him on to one of his most daring designs. "As a means of upsetting all their plans, I will march to the Elbe. There I have the advantage, since I have Hamburg, Magdeburg, Wittenberg, Torgau, and Dresden."[1] What faith he had in the defensive capacities of a great river line dotted with fortresses! His lieutenants did not share it. Caulaincourt tells us that his plan of dashing at Berlin roused general consternation at headquarters, and that the staff came in a body to beg him to give it up and march back to protect Leipzig. Reluctantly he abandons it, and then only to change it for one equally venturesome. He will crush Bernadotte and Blücher, or throw them beyond the Elbe, and then, himself crossing the Elbe, ascend its right bank, recross it at Torgau, and strike at Schwarzenberg's rear near Leipzig.

The plan promised well, provided that his men were walking machines, and that Schwarzenberg did nothing in the interval. But gradually the truth dawns on him that, while he sits weaving plans and dictating despatches — he sent off six in the small hours of October 12th — Blücher and Schwarzenberg are drawing near to Leipzig. On that day he prepared to fall back on that city, a resolve strengthened on the morrow by the capture of one of the enemy's envoys, who reported that they had great hopes of detaching Bavaria from the French cause.

The news was correct. Five days earlier, the King of Bavaria had come to terms with Austria, offering to place 36,000 troops at her disposal, while she, in return, guaranteed his complete sovereignty and a full territorial indemnity for any districts that he might be called on to restore to the Hapsburgs.[2] Napoleon knew not as yet the full

[1] Letter of October 10th to Reynier. This and his letter to Maret seem to me to refute Bernhardi's contention ("Toll," vol. iii., pp. 385–388) that Napoleon only meant to drive the northern allies across the Elbe, and then to turn on Schwarzenberg. The Emperor's plans shifted every few hours: but the plan of crossing the Elbe in great force was distinctly prepared for.

[2] Martens, "Traités," vol. ix., p. 610. This secret bargain cut the

import of the news, and it is quite incorrect to allege, as some heedless admirers have done, that this was the only thing that stayed his conquering march northwards.[1] His retreat to Leipzig was arranged before he heard the first rumour as to Bavaria's defection. But the tidings saddened his men on their miry march southwards; and, strange to say, the Emperor published it to all his troops at Leipzig on the 15th, giving it as the cause why they were about to fall back on the Rhine.

There was much to depress the Emperor when, on the 14th, he drew near to Leipzig. With him came the King and Queen of Saxony, who during the last days had resignedly moved along in the tail of this comet, which had blasted their once smiling realm. Outside the city they parted, the royal pair seeking shelter under its roofs, while the Emperor pressed on to Murat's headquarters near Wachau. There, too, the news was doubtful. The King of Naples had not, on that day, shown his old prowess. Though he disposed of larger masses of horsemen than those which the allies sent out to reconnoitre, he chose his ground of attack badly, and led his brigades in so loose an array that, after long swayings to and fro, the fight closed with advantage to the allies.[2] It was not without reason that Napoleon on that night received his Marshals rather coolly at his modest quarters in the village of Reudnitz. Leaning against the stove, he ran over several names of those who were now slack in their duty; and when Augereau was announced, he remarked that he was not the Augereau of Castiglione. "Ah! give me back the old soldiers of Italy, and I will show you that I am," retorted the testy veteran.

As a matter of fact, Napoleon was not the old Napoleon, not even the Napoleon of Dresden. There he had overwhelmed the foe by a rapid concentration. Now nothing decisive was done on the 15th, and time was thereby given the allies to mature their plans. Early on that day Blücher

ground from under the German unionists, like Stein, who desired to make away with the secondary princes, or strictly to limit their powers.

[1] Thiers and Bernhardi ("Toll," vol. iii., p. 388) have disposed of this fiction.

[2] Sir E. Wood, "Achievements of Cavalry."

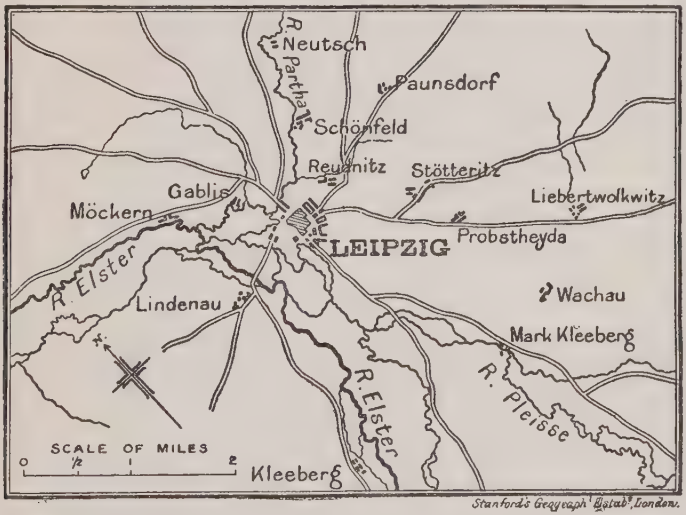
heard that on the morrow Schwarzenberg would attack Leipzig from the south-east, but would send a corps westwards to threaten it on the side of Lindenau. The Prussian leader therefore hurried on from the banks of the Saale, and at night the glare of his watch-fires warned Marmont that Leipzig would be assailed also from the north-west. Yet, despite the warnings which Napoleon received from his Marshal, he refused to believe that the north side was seriously threatened; and, as late as the dawn of the 16th, he bade his troops there to be ready to march through Leipzig and throw themselves on the masses of Schwarzenberg.[1] Had Napoleon given those orders on the 15th, all might have gone well; for all his available forces, except Ney's and Reynier's corps, were near at hand, making a total of nearly 150,000 men, while Schwarzenberg had as yet not many more. But those orders on the 16th were not only belated: they contributed to the defeat on the north side.

The Emperor's thoughts were concentrated on the south. There his lines stretched in convex front along undulating ground near Wachau and Liebertwolkwitz, about a league to the south and south-east of the town. His right was protected by the marshy ground of the small river Pleisse; his centre stretched across the roads leading towards Dresden, while his left rested on a small stream, the Parthe, which curves round towards the north-west and forms a natural defence to the town on the north. Yet to cautious minds his position seemed unsafe; he had in his rear a town whose old walls were of no military value, a town on which several roads converged from the north, east, and south, but from which, in case of defeat, he could retire westward only by one road, that leading over the now flooded streams of the Pleisse and the Elster. But the great captain himself thought only of victory. He had charged Macdonald and Ney to march from Taucha to his support: Marmont was to do the same; and, with these concentrated forces acting against the far more extended array of Schwarzenberg, he counted on overthrowing him

[1] "Corresp.," No. 20814. Marmont, vol. v., p. 281, acutely remarks that Napoleon now regarded as true only that which entered into his combinations and his thoughts.

on the morrow, and then crushing the disunited forces of Blücher and Bernadotte.[1]

The Emperor and Murat were riding along the ridge near Liebertwolkwitz, when, at nine o'clock, three shots fired in quick succession from the allies on the opposite heights opened the series of battles fitly termed the Battle of the Nations. For six hours a furious cannonade shook the earth, and the conflict surged to and fro with little decisive result; but when Macdonald's corps struck in from the north-east, the allies began to give ground.



Thereupon Napoleon launched two cavalry corps, those of Latour-Maubourg and Pajol, against the allied centre.

Then was seen one of the most superb sights of war. Rising quickly from behind the ridge, 12,000 horsemen rode in two vast masses against a weak point in the opposing lines. They were led by the King of Naples with all his wonted dash. Panting up the muddy slopes opposite, they sabred the gunners, enveloped the Russian squares,

[1] Bernadotte was only hindered from retreat across the Elbe by the remonstrances of his officers, by the forward move of Blücher, and by the fact that the Elbe bridges were now held by the French. For the council of war at Köthen on October 14th, see Boyen, vol. ii., p. 377.

and the three allied sovereigns themselves had to beat a hasty retreat to avoid capture. But the horses were soon spent by the furious pace at which Murat careered along; and a timely charge by Pahlen's Cossacks and the Silesian cuirassiers, brought up from the allied reserves beyond the Pleisse, drove the French brigades back in great disorder, with the loss of their able corps leaders. The allies by a final effort regained all the lost ground, and the day here ended in a drawn fight, with the loss of about 20,000 men to either side.

Meanwhile, on the west side of Leipzig, Bertrand had beaten off the attack of Giulay's Austrian corps on the village of Lindenau. But, further north, Marmont sustained a serious reverse. In obedience to Napoleon's order, he was falling back towards Leipzig, when he was sharply attacked by Yorck's corps at Möckern. Between that village and Eutritzsch further east the French Marshal offered a most obstinate resistance. Blücher, hoping to capture his whole corps, begged Sir Charles Stewart to ride back to Bernadotte and request his succour. The British envoy found the Swedish Prince at Halle and conjured him to make every exertion not to be the only leader left out of the battle.[1] It was in vain: his army was too far away; and only after the village of Möckern had been repeatedly taken and re-taken, was Marmont finally driven out by Yorck's Prussians.[2]

In truth, Marmont lacked the support of Ney's corps, which Berthier had led him to expect if he were attacked in force. But the orders were vague or contradictory. Ney had been charged to follow Macdonald and impart irresistible momentum to the onset which was to have crushed Schwarzenberg's right wing. He therefore only detached one weak division to cover Marmont's right flank, and with the other divisions marched away south, when an urgent message from Möckern recalled him to that side of Leipzig, with the result that his 15,000 men spent the whole day in useless marches and countermarches.[3]

[1] Müffling, "Campaign of 1813."

[2] Colonel Lowe, who was present, says it was won and lost five times (unpublished "Memoirs").

[3] Napoleon's bulletin of October 16th, 1813, blames Ney for this waste of a great corps; but it is clear, from the official orders published by Marmont (vol. v., pp. 373–378), that Napoleon did not expect any

The mishap was most serious. Had he strengthened Macdonald's outflanking move, the right wing of the allied Grand Army might have been shattered. Had he reinforced Marmont effectively, the position on the north might have been held. As it was, the French fell back from Möckern in confusion, losing 53 cannon; but they had inflicted on Yorck's corps a loss of 8,000 men out of 21,000. Relatively to the forces engaged, Albuera and Möckern are the bloodiest battles of the Napoleonic wars.

On the whole, Napoleon had dealt the allies heavier losses than he had sustained. But they could replace them. On the morrow Bennigsen was near at hand on the east with 41,000 Russians of the Army of Reserve; Colloredo's Austrian corps had also come up; and, in the north, Bernadotte's Army of the North, 60,000 strong, was known to be marching from Halle to reinforce Blücher. Napoleon, however, could only count on Reynier's corps of 15,000 men, mostly Saxons, who marched in from Düben. St. Cyr's corps of 27,000 men was too far away, at Dresden; and Napoleon must have bitterly rued his rashness in leaving that Marshal isolated on the south-east, while Davoust was also cut off at Hamburg. He now had scarcely 150,000 effectives left after the slaughter of the 16th; and of these, the German divisions were murmuring at the endless marches and privations. Everything helped to depress men's minds. On that Sabbath morning all was sombre desolation around Leipzig, while within that city naught was heard but the groans of the wounded and the lamentations of the citizens. Still Napoleon's spirit was unquenched. Amidst the steady rain he paced restlessly with Murat along the dykes of the Pleisse. The King assured him that the enemy had suffered enormous losses. Then, the dreary walk ended, the Emperor shut himself in his tent. His resolve was taken. He would try fortune once more.[1]

pitched battle on the north side on the 16th. He thought Bertrand's corps would suffice to defend the north and west, and left the defence on that side in a singularly vague state.

[1] Dedem de Gelder, "Mems.," p. 345, severely blames Napoleon's inaction on the 17th; either he should have attacked the allies before Bennigsen and Bernadotte came up, or have retreated while there was time.

Among the prisoners was the Austrian General Merveldt, over whom Napoleon had gained his first diplomatic triumph, that at Leoben. He it was, too, who had brought the first offers of an armistice after Austerlitz. These recollections touched the superstitious chords in the great Corsican's being ; for in times of stress the strongest nature harks back to early instincts. This harbinger of good fortune the Emperor now summoned and talked long and earnestly with him.[1] First, he complimented him on his efforts of the previous day to turn the French left at Dölitz ; next, he offered to free him on parole in order to return to the allied headquarters with proposals for an armistice. Then, after giving out that he had more than 200,000 men round Leipzig, he turned to the European situation. Why had Austria deserted him? At Prague she might have dictated terms to Europe. But the English did not want peace. To this Merveldt answered that they needed it sorely, but it must be not a truce, but a peace founded on the equilibrium of Europe. — "Well," replied Napoleon, "let them give me back my isles and I will give them back Hanover ; I will also re-establish the Hanse Towns and the annexed departments [of North Germany]. . . . But how treat with England, who wishes to bind me not to build more than thirty ships of the line in my ports?"[2]

As for the Confederation of the Rhine, those States might secede that chose to do so : but never would he cease to protect those that wanted his protection. As to giving Holland its independence, he saw a great difficulty : that land would then fall under the control of England. Italy ought to be under one sovereign ; that would suit

[1] Lord Burghersh, Sir George Jackson, Odeleben, and Fain all assign this conversation to the night of the 16th ; but Merveldt's official account of it (inclosed with Lord Cathcart's despatches), gives it as on October 17th, at 2 P.M. ("F. O.," Russia, No. 86). I follow this version rather than that given by Fain.

[2] That the British Ministers did not intend anything of the kind, even in the hour of triumph, is seen by Castlereagh's despatch of November 13th, 1813, to Lord Aberdeen, our envoy at the Austrian Court : "We don't wish to impose any dishonourable condition upon France, which limiting the number of her ships would be : but she must not be left in possession of this point [Antwerp]" ("Castlereagh Papers," 3rd series, vol. i., p. 76).

the European system. As he had abandoned Spain, that question was thereby decided. Why then should not peace be the result of an armistice? — The allied sovereigns thought differently, and at once waved aside the proposal. No answer was sent.

In fact, they had Napoleon in their power, as he surmised. Late on that Sunday, he withdrew his drenched and half-starved troops nearer to Leipzig; for Blücher had gained ground on the north and threatened the French line of retreat. Why the Emperor did not retreat during the night must remain a mystery. All the peoples of Europe were now closing in on him. On the north were Prussians, Russians, Swedes, and a few British troops. To the south-east were the dense masses of the allied Grand Army drawn from all the lands between the Alps and the Urals; and among Bennigsen's array on the east of Leipzig were to be seen the Bashkirs of Siberia, whose bows and arrows gained them from the French soldiery the sobriquet of *les Amours*.

To this ring of 300,000 fighters Napoleon could oppose scarcely half as many. Yet the French fought on, if not for victory, yet for honour; and, under the lead of Prince Poniatowski, whose valour on the 16th had gained him the coveted rank of a Marshal of France, the Poles once more clutched desperately at the wraith of their national independence. Napoleon took his stand with his staff on a hill behind Probstheyde near a half-ruined windmill, fit emblem of his fortunes; while, further south, the three allied monarchs watched from a higher eminence the vast horse-shoe of smoke slowly draw in towards the city. In truth, this immense conflict baffles all description. On the north-east, the Crown Prince of Sweden gradually drove his columns across the Parthe, while Blücher hammered at the suburbs.

Near the village of Paunsdorf, the allies found a weak place in the defence, where Reynier's Saxons showed signs of disaffection. Some few went over to the Russians in the forenoon, and about 3 P.M. others marched over with loud hurrahs. They did not exceed 3,000 men, with 19 cannon, but these pieces were at once effectively used against the French. Napoleon hurried towards the spot

with part of his Guards, who restored the fight on that side. But it was only for a time. The defence was everywhere overmatched.

Even the inspiration of his presence and the desperate efforts of Murat, Poniatowski, Victor, Macdonald, and thousands of nameless heroes barely held off the masses of the allied Grand Army. On the north and north-east, Marmont and Ney were equally overborne.[1] Worst of all the supply of cannon balls was running low. With pardonable exaggeration the Emperor afterwards wrote to Clarke: "If I had then had 30,000 rounds, I should to-day be the master of the world."

At nightfall, the chief returned weary and depressed to the windmill, and instructed Berthier to order the retreat. Then, beside a watch-fire, he sank down on a bench into a deep slumber, while his generals looked on in mournful silence. All around them there surged in the darkness the last cries of battle, the groans of the wounded, and the dull rumble of a retreating host. After a quarter of an hour he awoke with a start and threw an astonished look on his staff; then, recollecting himself, he bade an officer repair to the King of Saxony and tell him the state of affairs.

Early next morning, he withdrew into Leipzig, and, after paying a brief visit to the King, rode away towards the western gate. It was none too soon. The conflux of his still mighty forces, streaming in by three high-roads, produced in all the streets of the town a crush which thickened every hour. The Prussians and Swedes were breaking into the northern suburbs, while the white-coats drove in the defenders on the south. Slowly and painfully the throng of fugitives struggled through the town towards the western gate. On that side the confusion became ever worse, as the shots of the allies began to whiz across the arches and causeway that led over the Pleisse

[1] Boyden describes the surprising effects of the fire of the British rocket battery that served in Bernadotte's army. Captain Boyd brought it forward to check the charge of a French column against the Swedes. He was shot down, but Lieutenant Strengways poured in so hot a fire that the column was "blown asunder like an ant-heap," the men rushing back to cover amidst the loud laughter of the allies.

and the Elster, while the hurrahs of the Russians drew near on the north. Ammunition wagons, gendarmes, women, grenadiers and artillery, cavalry and cattle, the wounded, the dying, Marshals and sutlers, all were wedged into an indistinguishable throng that fought for a foothold on that narrow road of safety; and high above the din came the clash of merry bells from the liberated suburbs, bells that three days before had rung forced peals of triumph at Napoleon's orders, but now bade farewell for ever to French domination. To increase the rout, a temporary bridge thrown over the Elster broke down under the crush; and the rush for the roadway became more furious. In despair of reaching it, hundreds threw themselves into the flooded stream, but few reached the further shore: among the drowned was that flower of Polish chivalry, Prince Poniatowski.

But this mishap was soon to be outdone. A corporal of engineers, in the absence of his chief, had received orders to blow up the bridge outside the western gate, as soon as the pursuers were at hand; but, alarmed by the volleys of Sacken's Russians, whom Blücher had sent to work round by the river courses north-west of the town, the bewildered subaltern fired the mine while the rearguard and a great crowd of stragglers were still on the eastern side.[1] This was the climax of this day of disaster, which left in the hands of the allies as many as thirty generals,

[1] The premature explosion was of course due, not to Napoleon, but to the flurry of a serjeant and the skilful flanking move of Sacken's light troops, for which see Cathcart and Marmont. The losses at Leipzig were rendered heavier by Napoleon's humane refusal to set fire to the suburbs so as to keep off the allies. He rightly said he could have saved many thousand French had he done so. This is true. But it is strange that he had given no order for the construction of other bridges. Pelet and Fain affirm that he gave a verbal order; but, as Marbot explains, Berthier, the Chief of the Staff, had adopted the pedantic custom of never acting on anything less than *a written order*, which was not given. The neglect to secure means for retreat is all the stranger as the final miseries at the Beresina were largely due to official blundering of the same kind. Wellington's criticism on Napoleon's tactics at Leipzig is severe (despatch of January 10th, 1814): "If Bonaparte had not placed himself in a position that every other officer would have avoided, and remained in it longer than was consistent with any ideas of prudence, he would have retired in such a state that the allies could not have ventured to approach the Rhine."

including Lauriston and Reynier, and 33,000 of the rank and file, along with 260 cannon and 870 ammunition wagons. From the village of Lindenau Napoleon gazed back at times over the awesome scene, but in general he busied himself with reducing to order the masses that had struggled across. The Old Guard survived, staunch as ever, and had saved its 120 cannon, but the Young Guard was reduced to a mere wreck. Amidst all the horrors of that day, the Emperor maintained a stolid composure, but observers saw that he was bathed in sweat. Towards evening, he turned and rode away westwards; and from the weary famished files, many a fierce glance and muttered curse shot forth as he passed by. Men remembered that it was exactly a year since the Grand Army broke up from Moscow.

Yet, despite the ravages of typhus, the falling away of the German States, and the assaults of the allied horse, the retreating host struggled stoutly on towards the Rhine. At Hanau it swept aside an army of Bavarians and Austrians that sought to bar the road to France; and, early in November, 40,000 armed men, with a larger number of unarmed stragglers, filed across the bridge at Mainz. Napoleon had not only lost Germany; he left behind in its fortresses as many as 190,000 troops, of whom nearly all were French; and of the 1,300 cannon with which he began the second part of the campaign, scarce 200 were now at hand for the defence of his Empire.

The causes of this immense disaster are not far to seek. They were both political and military. In staking all on the possession of the line of the Elbe, Napoleon was engulfing himself in a hostile land. At the first signs of his overthrow, the national spirit of Germany was certain to inflame the Franconians and Westphalians in his rear, and imperil his communications. In regard to strategy, he committed the same blunder as that perpetrated by Mack in 1805. He trusted to a river line that could easily be turned by his foes. As soon as Austria declared against him, his position on the Elbe was fully as perilous as Mack's lines of the Iller at Ulm. And yet, in spite of the obvious danger from the great

ENTRY OF THE ALLIES INTO LEIPZIG, OCTOBER 19TH, 1813.

From an engraving published in 1815.

mountain bastion of Bohemia that stretched far away in his rear, the Emperor kept his troops spread out from Königstein to Hamburg, and ventured on long and wearying marches into Silesia, and north to Düben, which left his positions in Saxony almost at the mercy of the allied Grand Army.[1] By emerging from the mighty barrier of the Erzgebirge, that army compelled him three times to give up his offensive moves and hastily to fall back into the heart of Saxony.

The plain truth is that he was out-generalled by the allies. The assertion may seem to savour of profanity. Yet, if words have any meaning, the phrase is literally correct. His aim was primarily to maintain himself on the line of the Elbe, but also, though in the second place, to keep up his communication with France. Their aim was to leave him the Elbe line, but to cut him off from France. Even at the outset they planned to strike at Leipzig : their attack on Dresden was an afterthought, timidly and slowly carried out. As long, however, as their Grand Army clung to the Urz Mountains, they paralyzed his movements to the east and north, which merely played into their hands.

As regards the execution of the allied plans, the honours must unquestionably rest with Blücher and Gneisenau. Their tactful retreats before Napoleon in Silesia, their crushing blow at Macdonald, above all, their daring flank march to Wartenburg and thence to Halle, are exploits of a very high order ; and doubtless it was the emergence of this unsuspected volcanic force from the unbroken flats of continental mediocrity that nonplussed Napoleon and led to the results described above. Truly heroic was Blücher's determination to push on to Leipzig, even when the enemy was seizing the Elbe bridges in his rear. The veteran saw clearly that a junction with Schwarzenberg near Leipzig was the all-important step, and that it must bring back the French to that point. His judgment was as sound as his strokes were trenchant ; and

[1] Sir Charles Stewart wrote (March 22nd, 1814) : "On the Elbe Napoleon was quite insane, and his lengthened stay there was the cause of the Battle of Leipzig and all his subsequent misfortunes" ("Castlereagh Papers," vol. ix., p. 373).

owing to the illusions which Napoleon still cherished as to the saving strength of the Elbe line, the French arrived on that mighty battle-field half-famished and wearied by fruitless marches and countermarches. Of all Napoleon's campaigns, that of the second part of 1813 must rank as by far the weakest in conception, the most fertile in blunders, and the most disastrous in its results for France.

CHAPTER XXXVI

FROM THE RHINE TO THE SEINE

"The Emperor Napoleon must become King of France. Up to now all his work has been done for the Empire. He lost the Empire when he lost his army. When he no longer makes war for the army, he will make peace for the French people, and then he will become King of France." — Such were the words of the most sagacious of French statesmen to Schwarzenberg. They were spoken on April 15th, 1813, when it still seemed likely that Napoleon would meet half-way the wishes of Austria. Such, at least, was Talleyrand's ardent hope. He saw the innate absurdity of attempting to browbeat Austria, and strangle the infant Hercules of German nationality, after the Grand Army had been lost in Russia.

If this was reasonable in the spring of 1813, it was an imperative necessity at the close of the year. Napoleon had in the meantime lost 400,000 men: and he could not now say, as he did to Metternich of his losses in Russia, that "nearly half were Germans." The men who had fallen in Saxony, or who bravely held out in the Polish, German, and Spanish fortresses, were nearly all French. They were, what the *triarii* were to the Roman legion, the reserves of the fighting manhood of France. That unhappy land was growing restless under its disasters. In Spain, Wellington had blockaded Pamplona, stormed St. Sebastian, thrown Soult back on the Pyrenees in a series of desperate conflicts, and planted the British flag on the soil of France, eleven days before Napoleon was overthrown at Leipzig. Then, pressing northwards, in compliance with the urgent appeals of the allied sovereigns, our great commander assailed the lines south of the Nivelle, on which the French had been working for three months, drove the

enemy out of them and back over the river, with a loss of 4,200 men and 51 guns (November 10th).[1]

The same tale was told in the north. The allies were welcomed by the secondary German princes, who, in return for compacts guaranteeing their sovereignty, promised to raise contingents that amounted in all to upwards of a quarter of a million of men. Bernadotte marched against the Danes and cut off Davoust in Hamburg, where that Marshal bravely held out to the end of the war. Elsewhere in the north Napoleon's domination quickly mouldered away. Bülow, aided by a small British force, invaded Holland early in November; and, with the old cry of *Orange boven*, the Dutch tore down the French tricolour and welcomed back the Prince of Orange. In Italy, Eugène remained faithful to his step-father and repulsed all the overtures of the allies: but Murat, whose allegiance had already been shaken by the secret offers of the allies, now began to show signs of going over to them, as he did at the dawn of the New Year.[2]

Meanwhile Napoleon had arrived at Paris (November 9th). He found his capital sunk in depression, and

[1] Napier, vol. v., pp. 368–378.

[2] On November 10th Lord Aberdeen, our ambassador at the Austrian Court, wrote to Castlereagh: "... As soon as he [Murat] received the last communication addressed to him by Prince Metternich and myself at Prague, he wrote to Napoleon and stated that the affairs of his kingdom absolutely demanded his presence. Without waiting for any answer, he immediately began his journey, and did not halt a moment till he arrived at Basle. While on the road he sent a cyphered despatch to Prince Cariati, his Minister at Vienna, in which he informs him that he hopes to be at Naples on the 4th of this month: that he burns with desire to revenge himself of [*sic*] all the injuries he has received from Bonaparte, and to connect himself with the cause of the allies in contending for a just and stable peace. He proposes to declare war on the instant of his arrival." Again, on December 19th, Aberdeen writes: "You may consider the affair of Murat as settled. ... It will probably end in Austria agreeing to his having a change of frontier on the Papal territory, just enough to satisfy his vanity and enable him to show something to his people. I doubt much if it will be possible, with the claims of Sicily, Sardinia, and Austria herself in the north of Italy, to restore to him the three Legations: but something adequate must be done" ("Austria," No. 102). The disputes between Murat and Napoleon will be cleared up in Baron Lumbroso's forthcoming work, "Murat." Meanwhile see Bignon, vol. xiii., pp. 181 *et seq.*; Desvernois, "Mems.," ch. xx.; and Chaptal (p. 305), for Fouché's treacherous advice to Murat.

indignant at the author of its miseries. Peace was the dearest wish of all. Marie Louise confessed it by her tears, Cambacérès by his tactful reserve, and the people by their cries, while the sullen demeanour or bitter words of the Marshals showed that their patience was exhausted. Evidently a scapegoat was needed: it was found in the person of Maret, Duc de Bassano, whose devotion to Napoleon had reduced the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to a highly paid clerkship. For the crime of not bending his master's inflexible will at Dresden, he was now cast as a sop to the peace party; and his portfolio was intrusted to Caulaincourt, Duc de Vicenza (November 20th). The change was salutary. The new Minister, when ambassador at St. Petersburg, had been highly esteemed by the Czar for his frank, chivalrous demeanour. Our countrywoman, Lady Burghersh, afterwards testified to his personal charm: "I never saw a countenance so expressive of kindness, sweetness, and openness."[1] And these gifts were fortified by a manly intelligence, a profound love of France, and by devotion to her highest interests. The first of her interests was obviously peace; and there now seemed some chance of his conferring this boon on her and on the world at large.

On November the 8th and 9th Metternich had two interviews at Frankfurt with Baron St. Aignan, a brother-in-law of Caulaincourt, and formerly the French envoy at Weimar. The Austrian Minister assured him of the moderation of the allies, especially of England, and of their wish for a lasting peace founded on the principle of the balance of power. France must give up all control of Spain, Italy, and Germany, and return to her natural frontiers, the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees. Lord Aberdeen, our ambassador to Austria, and Count Nesselrode, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, were present at the second interview, and assented to this statement, the latter pledging his word that it had the approval of Prussia. Aberdeen added his assurance that England was prepared to relax her maritime code and sacrifice many of her conquests in

[1] Lady Burghersh's "Journal," p. 182.

order to attain a durable peace. To these Frankfurt overtures Napoleon charged Maret to answer in vaguely favourable terms, and to suggest the meeting of a European Congress at Mannheim. The effect of this Note (November 16th) was marred by the strange statement — "a peace based on the independence of all nations, both from the continental and the maritime point of view, has always been the constant object of the desires and policy of the Emperor [Napoleon]."[1]

Metternich in reply pointed out that the French Government had not accepted the proposed terms as a basis for negotiations. The new Foreign Minister, Caulaincourt, sent off (December 2nd) an acceptance which was far more frank and satisfactory; but the day before he penned it, the allies had virtually withdrawn their offer, as they had told him they would do if it was not speedily accepted. They had all along decided not to stay the military operations; and, as these were still flowing strongly in their favour, they could not be expected to keep open an offer which was exceedingly favourable to Napoleon even at the time when it was made, that is, before the support of the Dutch, of the Swiss, and of Murat was fully assured.

It may be well to pause for a moment to inquire what were the views of the allied Governments, and of Napoleon himself, at this crisis when Europe was seething in the political crucible. Had Metternich the full assent of those Governments when he offered the French Emperor the natural frontiers? Here we must separate the views of Lord Aberdeen from those of the British Cabinet, as represented by its Foreign Minister, Lord Castlereagh: and we must also distinguish between the Emperor Alexander and his Minister, Nesselrode, a man of weak character, in whom he had little confidence. Certainly the British Cabinet was not disposed to leave Antwerp in Napoleon's hands.

[1] Fain, "Manuscrit de 1814," pp. 48–63. Ernouf, "Vie de Maret," p. 606, states that Napoleon touched up Maret's note; the sentence quoted above is doubtless the Emperor's. The same author proves that Maret's advice had always been more pacific than was supposed, and that now, in his old position of Secretary of State, he gave Caulaincourt valuable help during the negotiations at Châtillon.

"This nation," wrote Castlereagh to Aberdeen on November 13th, "is likely to view with disfavour any peace which does not confine France within her ancient limits. . . . We are still ready to encounter, with our allies, the hazards of peace, if peace can be made on the basis proposed, satisfactorily executed [*sic*]; and we are not inclined to go out of our way to interfere in the internal government of France, however much we might desire to see it placed in more pacific hands. But I am satisfied we must not encourage our allies to patch up an imperfect arrangement. If they will do so, we must submit; but it should appear in that case, to be their own act, and not ours. . . . I must particularly entreat you to keep your attention upon Antwerp. The destruction of that arsenal is essential to our safety. To leave it in the hands of France is little short of imposing upon Great Britain the charge of a perpetual war establishment." [1]

Thenceforth British policy inclined, though tentatively and with some hesitations, to the view that it was needful in the interests of peace to bring France back to the limits of 1791, that is, of withdrawing from her, not only Holland, the Rhineland, and Italy, but also Belgium, Savoy, and Nice. The Prussian patriots were far more decided. They were determined that France should not dominate the Rhineland and overawe Germany from the fortresses of Mainz, Coblenz, and Wesel. On this subject Arndt spoke forth with no uncertain sound in a pamphlet — "The Rhine, Germany's river, not her boundary" — which proved that the French claim to the Rhine frontier was consonant neither with the teachings of history nor the distribution of the two peoples. The pamphlet had an immense effect in stirring up Germans to attack the cherished French doctrine of the natural frontiers, and it clinched the claim which he had put forward in his "Fatherland" song of the year before. It bade Germans strive for Trèves and Cologne, aye, even for Strassburg and Metz. Hardenberg and Stein, differing on most points,

[1] "Castlereagh Papers," 3rd series, vol. i., p. 74. This was written, of course, before he heard of the Frankfurt proposals; but it anticipates them in a remarkable way. Thiers states that Castlereagh, after hearing of them, sent Aberdeen new instructions. I cannot find any in our archives. This letter warned Aberdeen against any compromise on the subject of Antwerp; but it is clear that Castlereagh, when he came to the allied headquarters, was a partisan of peace, as compared with the Czar and the Prussian patriots. Schwarzenberg wrote (January 26th) at Langres: "We ought to make peace here: our Kaiser, also Stadion, Metternich, even Castlereagh, are fully of this opinion — but Kaiser Alexander!"

united in praising this work. Even before it appeared, the former chafed at the thought of Napoleon holding the left bank of the Rhine. On hearing of Metternich's Frankfurt offer to the French Emperor, he wrote in his diary: "Propositions of peace without my assent — Rhine, Alps, Pyrenees: a mad business."[1]

Frederick William's views were less pronounced: in fact, his proneness to see a lion in every path earned for him the *sobriquet* of Cassandra in his Chancellor's diary. But in the main he was swayed by the Czar; and that autocrat was now determined to dictate at Paris a peace that would rid him of all prospect of his great rival's revenge. Vanity and fear alike prescribed such a course of action. He longed to lead his magnificent Guards to Paris, there to display his clemency in contrast to the action of the French at Moscow; and this sentiment was fed by fear of Napoleon. The latter motive was concealed, of course, but Lord Aberdeen gauged its power during a private interview that he had with Alexander at Freiburg (December 24th): "He talked with great freedom: he is more decided than ever as to the necessity of perseverance, and puts little trust in the fair promises of Bonaparte. —'*So long as he lives there can be no security*' —he repeated it two or three times."[2] We can therefore understand his concern lest the Frankfurt terms should be accepted outright by Napoleon. Metternich, however, assured him that the French Emperor would not assent;[3] and, as in regard to the Prague Congress, he was substantially correct.

Here again we touch on the disputed question whether Metternich played a fair game against Napoleon, or whether he tempted him to play with loaded dice while his throne was at stake. The latter supposition for a long time held the field; but it is untenable. On several occasions the Austrian statesman warned Napoleon, or his trusty advisers, that the best course open to him was to sign peace at once. He did so at Dresden, and he did so now. On November 10th he sent Caulaincourt a letter, of which these are the most important sentences:

[1] Fournier, "Der Congress von Châtillon," p. 242.
[2] "Castlereagh Papers," *loc. cit.*, p. 112.
[3] Metternich, "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 214.

". . . M. de St. Aignan will speak to you of my conversations [with him]. I expect nothing from them, but I shall have done my duty. France will never sign a more fortunate peace than that which the Powers will make to-day, and to-morrow if they have reverses. New successes may extend their views. . . . I do not doubt that the approach of the allied armies to the frontiers of France may facilitate the formation of great armaments by her Government. The questions will become problematical for the civilized world; but the Emperor Napoleon will not make peace. There is my profession of faith, and I shall never be happier than if I am wrong."

The letter rings true in every part. Metternich made no secret of sending it, but allowed Lord Aberdeen to see it.[1] And by good fortune it reached Caulaincourt about the time when he assumed the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. Its substance must therefore have been known to Napoleon; and the tone of the Frankfurt proposals ought to have convinced him of the need of speedily making peace while Austria held out the olive branch from across the Rhine. But Metternich's gloomy forecast was only too true. During his sojourn at Paris he had tested the rigidity of that cast-iron will.

In fact, no one who knew the Emperor's devotion to Italy could believe that he would give up Piedmont and Liguria. His own despatches show that he never contemplated such a surrender. On November 20th he gave orders for the enrolling of forty-six thousand Frenchmen *of mature age* — "not Italians or Belgians" — who were to reinforce Eugène and help him to defend Italy; that, too, at a time when the defence of Champagne and Languedoc was about to devolve on lads of eighteen.

He was equally determined not to give up Holland. On the possession of this maritime and industrious community he had always laid great stress. He once remarked to Roederer that the ruin of the French Bourbons was due to three events — the battle of Rossbach, the affair of the diamond necklace, and the victory of Anglo-Prussian influence over that of France in Dutch affairs (1787). He even appealed to Nature to prove that that land must form part of the French Empire. "Holland," said one of his Ministers in 1809, "is the alluvium of the Rhine, Meuse, and Scheldt — in other words, one of the great

[1] "F. O.," Austria, No. 102.

arteries of the Empire." Before the last battle at Leipzig he told Merveldt that he could not grant Holland its independence, for it would fall under the tutelage of England. And even while his Empire was crumbling away after that disaster, he wrote to his mother : "Holland is a French country, *and will remain so for ever.*" [1]

Russia, Prussia, and Britain were equally determined that the Dutch should be independent ; and if Metternich wavered on the subject of Dutch independence, his hesitation was at an end by the middle of December ; for a memorandum of the Russian diplomatist, Pozzo di Borgo, states that Metternich then regarded the Rhine boundary as ending at Düsseldorf : "after that town the river takes the name of Waal." [2] Such juggling with geography was surely superfluous ; for by that time the Frankfurt terms had virtually lapsed, owing to Napoleon's belated acceptance ; and Metternich had joined the other allied Governments that now demanded a more thorough solution of the boundary question.

In fact, the allies were now able to make political capital out of their recent moderation.[3] On December 1st they issued an appeal to the French nation to the following effect : "We do not make war on France, but we are casting off the yoke which your Government imposed on our countries. We hoped to have found peace before touching your soil : we now go to find it there."

If the sovereigns hoped by means of this declaration to separate France from Napoleon, they erred. To cross the Rhine was to attack, not Napoleon, but the French Revolution. Belgium and the Rhine boundary had been won by Dumouriez, Jourdain, Pichegru, and Moreau, at a time when Bonaparte's name was unknown outside Corsica and Provence. France had looked on wearily at Napoleon's wars in Germany, Spain, and Russia : they concerned him, not her. But when the "sacred soil" was threatened, citizens began to close their ranks : they ceased their declamations against the crushing taxes and youth-

[1] "Lettres inédites" (November 6th, 1813).

[2] The memorandum is endorsed, "Extract of Instructions delivered to me by Gen. Pozzo di Borgo, 18 Dec., 1813" ("Russia," No. 92).

[3] Metternich's letter to Hudelist, in Fournier, p. 242.

slaying conscription : they submitted to heavier taxes and levies of still younger lads. In fact, by doffing the mask of Charlemagne, the Emperor became once more the Bonaparte of the days of Marengo.

He counted on some such change in public opinion; and it enabled him to defy with impunity the beginnings of a Parliamentary opposition. The Senate had been puffily obsequious, as usual; but the *Corps Législatif* had mistaken its functions. Summoned to vote new taxes, it presumed to give advice. A commission of its members agreed to a report on the existing situation, drawn up by Lainé, which gave the Emperor great offence. Its crime lay in its outspoken requests that peace should be concluded on the basis of the natural frontiers, that the rigours of the conscription should be abated, and that the laws which guaranteed the free exercise of political rights should be maintained intact. The Emperor was deeply incensed, and, despite the advice of his Ministers, determined to dissolve the Chamber forthwith (December 31st). Not content with this exercise of arbitrary power, he subjected its members to a barrack-like rebuke at the official reception on New Year's Day. — He had convoked them to do good, and they had done evil. Two battles lost in Champagne would not have been so harmful as their last action. What was their mandate compared with his? France had twice chosen *him* by some millions of votes : while *they* were nominated only by a few hundreds apiece. They had flung mud at him : but he was a man who might be slain, never dishonoured. He would fight for the nation, hurl back the foe, and conclude an honourable peace. Then, for their shame, he would print and circulate their report. — Such was the gist of this diatribe, which he shot forth in strident tones and with flashing eyes. He had the copies of the report destroyed, and dismissed the deputies to their homes throughout France.

The country, in the main, took his side; and doubtless the national instinct was sound; for the allies had crossed the Rhine, and France once more was in danger. As in 1793, when the nation welcomed the triumph of the dare-devil Jacobins over the respectable parliamentary

Girondins, as promising a vigorous rule and the expulsion of the monarchical invaders, so now the soldiers and peasants, if not the middle classes, rejoiced at the discomfiture of the talkers by the one necessary man of action. The general feeling was pithily expressed by an old peasant: "It's no longer a question of Bonaparte. Our soil is invaded: let us go and fight."

This was the feeling which the Emperor ruthlessly exploited. He decreed the enrolment of a great force of National Guards, exacted further levies for the regular army, and ordered a *levée en masse* for the eastern Departments. The difficulties in his way were enormous. But he flung himself at the task with incomparable *verve*. Soldiers were wanting: youths were dragged forth, even from the royalist districts of the extreme north and west and south. Money was wanting: it was extorted from all quarters, and Napoleon not only lavished 55,000,000 francs from his own private hoard, but seized that of his parsimonious mother.[1] Cannon, muskets, uniforms were wanting: their manufacture was pushed on with feverish haste: Napoleon ordered his War Office to "procure all the cloth in France, good and bad," so as to have 200,000 uniforms ready by the end of February; and he counted on having half a million of effectives in the field at the close of spring.

Among these he reckoned — so, at least, he wrote to Melzi — "nearly 200,000" French soldiers from Arragon, Catalonia, and at Bayonne. Even if we allow for his desire to encourage his officials in Italy, the estimate is curious. Wellington at that time, it is true, had lessened his numbers by sending back across the Pyrenees all his Spanish troops, whose atrocities endangered that good understanding with the French peasantry which our great leader, for political motives, was determined to cultivate.[2] Yet, despite the shrinkage in numbers, he drove the French from the banks of the River Nive, and inflicted on them severe losses in desperate conflicts near Bayonne (December 9th–13th). In fact, the intrenched camp in front of

[1] Houssaye's "1814," p. 14; Metternich, "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 308.

[2] "Our success and everything depends upon our moderation and justice," he wrote to Lord Bathurst (Napier, bk. xxiii., ch. ii.).

that town was now the sole barrier to Wellington's advance northwards, and it was with difficulty that Soult clung to this position. The peasantry, too, finding that they were far better treated by Wellington's troops than by their own soldiers, began to favour the allied cause, with results that will shortly appear. Yet these disquieting symptoms did not daunt Napoleon; for he now based his hopes of resisting the British advance on a compact which he had concluded with Ferdinand VII., the rightful King of Spain.

As soon as he returned to St. Cloud after the Leipzig campaign he made secret overtures to that unhappy exile;[1] and by the Treaty of Valençay (December 11th, 1813) he agreed to recognize him as King of the whole of Spain, provided that British and French troops evacuated that land. His imagination ran riot in picturing the results of this treaty. Ferdinand was to enter Spain; Suchet, then playing a losing game in Catalonia, was quietly to withdraw his columns through the Pyrenees, while Wellington would have his base of operations cut from under him, and thenceforth be a negligeable quantity.[2] These pleasing fancies all rested on the acceptance of the new treaty by the Spanish Regency and Cortes. But, alas for Napoleon! they at once rejected it, declaring null and void all acts of Ferdinand while he was a prisoner, and forbidding all negotiations with France while French troops remained in the Peninsula (January 8th).

[1] "Lettres inédites" (November 12th). The date is important: it refutes Napier's statement (bk. xxiii., ch. iv.) that the Emperor had planned that Ferdinand should enter Spain early in November when the disputes between Wellington and the Cortes at Madrid were at their height. Bignon (vol. xiii., p. 88 *et seq.*) says that Talleyrand's indiscretion revealed the negotiations to the Spanish Cortes and Wellington; but our general's despatches show that he did not hear of them before January 9th or 10th. He then wrote: "I have long suspected that Bonaparte would adopt this expedient; and if he had had less pride and more common sense, it would have succeeded."

[2] On January 14th the Emperor ordered Soult, as soon as the ratification of the treaty was known, to set out northwards from Bayonne "with all his army, only leaving what is necessary to form a screen." Suchet was likewise to hurry with 10,000 foot, *en poste*, and two-thirds of his horse, to Lyons. On the 22nd the Emperor blames both Marshals for not sending off the infantry, though the Spanish treaty had *not* been ratified. After long delays Ferdinand set out for Spain on March 13th, when the war was almost over.

Equally disappointing were affairs in Italy. On the 11th of January, Murat made an alliance with Austria, and promised to aid her with a corps of 30,000 Neapolitans, while she guaranteed him his throne and a slice of the Roman territory. Napoleon directed Eugène, as soon as this bad news was confirmed, to prepare to fall back on the Alps. But, in order to clog Murat's movements, the Emperor resolved to make use of the spiritual power, which for six years he had slighted. He gave orders that the aged Pope should be released from his detention at Fontainebleau, and hurried secretly to Rome. "Let him burst on that place like a clap of thunder," he wrote to Savary (January 21st). But this stagey device was not to succeed. Even now Napoleon insisted on conditions with which Pius VII. could not conscientiously comply, and he was still detained at Tarrascon when his captor was setting out for Elba.

Three days after Murat's desertion, Denmark fell away from Napoleon. Overborne by the forces of Bernadotte, the little kingdom made peace with England and Sweden, agreeing to yield up Norway to the latter Power in consideration of recovering an indemnity in Germany. To us the Danes ceded Heligoland. Thus, within three months of the disaster at Leipzig, all Napoleon's allies forsook him, and all but the Danes were now about to fight against him — a striking proof of the artificiality of his domination.

By this time it was clear that even France would soon be stricken to the heart unless Napoleon speedily concentrated his forces. On the north and east the allies were advancing with a speed that nonplussed the Emperor. Accustomed to sluggish movements on their part, he had not expected an invasion in force before the spring, and here it was in the first days of January. Bülow and Graham had overrun Holland. The allies, with the exception of the Czar, had no scruples about infringing the neutrality of Switzerland, as Napoleon had consistently done, and the constitution, which he had imposed upon that land eleven years before, now straightway collapsed. Detaching a strong corps southwards to hold the Simplon and Great St. Bernard Passes and threaten Lyons,

Schwarzenberg led the allied Grand Army into France by way of Basel, Belfort, and Langres. The prompt seizure of the Plateau of Langres was an important success. The allies thereby turned the strong defensive lines of the Vosges Mountains, and of the Rivers Moselle and Meuse, so that Blücher, with his "Army of Silesia," was able rapidly to advance into Lorraine, and drive Victor from Nancy. Toul speedily surrendered, and the sturdy veteran then turned to the south-west, in order to come into touch with Schwarzenberg's columns. Neither leader delayed before the eastern fortresses. The allies had learnt from Napoleon to invest or observe them and press on, a course which their vast superiority of force rendered free from danger. Schwarzenberg, on the 25th, had 150,000 men between Langres, Chaumont, and Bar-sur-Aube ; while Blücher, with about half those numbers, crossed the Marne at St. Dizier, and was drawing near to Brienne. In front of them were the weak and disheartened corps of Marmont, Ney, Victor, and Macdonald, mustering in all about 50,000 men. Desertions to the allies were frequent, and Blücher, wishing to show that the war was practically over, dismissed both deserters and prisoners to their homes.[1]

But the war was far from over : it had not yet begun. Hitherto Napoleon had hurried on the preparations from Paris, but the urgency of the danger now beckoned him eastwards. As before, he left the Empress as Regent of France, but appointed King Joseph as Lieutenant-General of France. On Sunday, January 23rd, he held the last reception. It was in the large hall of the Tuileries, where the Parisian rabble had forced Louis XVI. to don the *bonnet rouge*. Another dynasty was now tottering to its fall ; but none could have read its doom in the faces of the obsequious courtiers, or of the officers of the Parisian National Guards, who offered their homage to the heir of the Revolution.

He came forward with the Empress and the King of Rome, a flaxen-haired child of three winters, clad in the uniform of the National Guard. Taking the boy by the hand into the midst of the circle, he spoke these touching

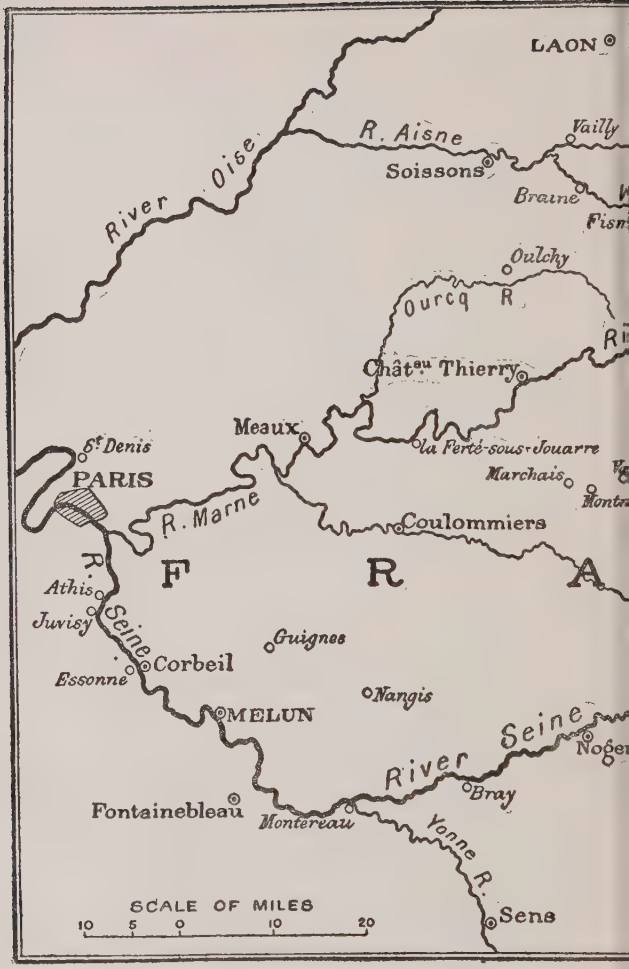
[1] Houssaye's "1814," ch. ii. ; Müffling's "Campaign of 1814."

words: "Gentlemen, — I am about to set out for the army. I intrust to you what I hold dearest in the world — my wife and my son. Let there be no political divisions." He then carried him amidst his dignitaries and officers, while sobs and shouts bespoke the warmth of the feelings kindled by this scene. And never, surely, since the young Maria Theresa appealed in person to the Hungarian magnates to defend her against rapacious neighbours, had any monarch spoken so straight to the hearts of his lieges. The secret of his success is not far to seek. He had not commanded as Emperor: he had appealed as a father to fathers and mothers.

It is painful to have to add that many who there swore to defend him were even then beginning to plot his overthrow. Most painful of all is it to remember that when, before dawn of the 25th, Marie Louise bade him farewell, it was her last farewell: for she, too, deserted him in his misfortunes, refused to share his exile, and ultimately degraded herself by her connection with Count Neipperg.

Heedless of all that the future might bring, and concentrating his thoughts on the problems of the present, the great warrior journeyed rapidly eastwards to Châlons-sur-Marne, and opened the most glorious of his campaigns. And yet it began with disaster. At Brienne, among the scenes of his school-days, he assailed Blücher in the hope of preventing the junction of the Army of Silesia with that of Schwarzenberg further south (January 29th). After sharp fighting, the Prussians were driven from the castle and town. But the success was illusory. Blücher withdrew towards Bar-sur-Aube, in order to gain support from Schwarzenberg, and, three days later, turned the tables on Napoleon while the latter was indulging in hopes that the allies were about to treat seriously for peace.[1] Nevertheless, though surprised by greatly superior numbers, the 40,000 French clung obstinately to the village of La Rothière until their thin lines were everywhere driven in or outflanked, with the loss of 73 cannon and more than 3,000 prisoners. Each side lost about 5,000 killed and wounded — a mere trifle to the allies, but a grave disaster to the defenders.

[1] Letter of January 31st to Joseph.


LAON
Vailly
R. Aisne
River Oise
Soissons
Braine
Oulchy
Ourcq R.
Chât.au Thierry
Meaux
St Denis
la Ferté-sous-Jouarre
PARIS
Marchais
R. Marne
Coulommiers
R.
F
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A
Athis
Juvisy
Seine
Guignes
Corbeil
Essonne
Nangis
MELUN
River Seine
Bray
Fontainebleau
Montereau
Yonne R.
Sens
SCALE OF MILES
10 5 0 10 20

CAMPA

St. Denis
le Bourget
R. Seine
St. Ouen
Aubervilliers
Canal
Entrenchments of '92
Canal de l'Ourcq
Bondy
la Villette
Pantin
Montmartre
Butte Chaumont
Rosny
Belleville
PARIS
Montreuil
Vincennes
SCALE OF MILES
R. Aisne
Berry-au-Bac
Reims
CHÂLONS
Vertus
Bergères
Fère-Champenoise
N
C
Vitry
E
St. Dixier
Sommepuis
R. Marne
Plancy
Arcis-sur-Aube
Vassy
Voire R.
Mery
Ronay
Pougy
Lesmont
Brienne
Doulevent
Piney
la Rothière
Riv. Aube
R. Seine
TROYES
Bar-sur-Aube
Bar-sur-Seine
CHAUMONT
Stanford's Geograph.l Estab.t, London.

1814.

The Emperor was much discouraged. He had put forth his full strength, exposed his own person to the hottest fire, so as to encourage his men, and yet failed to prevent the union of the allied armies, or to hold the line of the River Aube. Early on the morrow he left the castle of Brienne, and took the road for Troyes; while Marmont, with a corps now reduced to less than 3,000 men, bravely defended the passage of the Voire at Rosnay, and, after delaying the pursuit, took post at Arcis-sur-Aube. The means of defence, both moral and material, seemed wellnigh exhausted. When, on February 3rd, Napoleon entered Troyes, scarcely a single *vivat* was heard. Even the old troops were cast down by defeat and hunger, while as many as 6,000 conscripts are said to have deserted. The inhabitants refused to supply the necessaries of life except upon requisition. "The army is perishing of famine," writes the Emperor at Troyes. Again at Nogent: "Twelve men have died of hunger, though we have used fire and sword to get food on our way here." And, now, into the space left undefended between the Marne and the Aube, Blücher began to thrust his triumphant columns, with no barrier to check him until he neared the environs of Paris. Once more the Prussian and Russian officers looked on the war as over, and invited one another to dinner at the Palais-Royal in a week's time.[1]

But it was on this confidence of the old hussar-general that Napoleon counted. He knew his proneness to daring movements, and the strong bias of Schwarzenberg towards delay: he also divined that they would now separate their forces, Blücher making straight for Paris, while other columns would threaten the capital by way of Troyes and Sens. That was why he fell back on Troyes, so as directly to oppose the latter movement, "or so as to return and manœuvre against Blücher and stay his march."[2] Another motive was his expectation of finding at Nogent the 15,000 veterans whom he had ordered Soult to send northwards. And doubtless the final reason was his determination to use the sheltering curve of the Seine, which between

[1] "Méms. de Langeron," in Houssaye, p. 62; but see Müffling.
[2] Letter of February 2nd to Clarke.

Troyes and Nogent flows within twenty miles of the high-road that Blücher must use if he struck at Paris. At many a crisis Napoleon had proved the efficacy of a great river line. From Rivoli to Friedland his career abounds in examples of riverine tactics. The war of 1813 was one prolonged struggle for the line of the Elbe. He still continued the war because he could not yet bring himself to sign away the Rhenish fortresses: and he now hoped to regain that "natural boundary" by blows showered on divided enemies from behind the arc of the Seine.

With wonderful prescience he had guessed at the general plan of the allies. But he could scarcely have dared to hope that on that very day (February 2nd) they were holding a council of war at Brienne, and formally resolved that Blücher should march north-west on Paris with about 50,000 men, while the allied Grand Army of nearly three times those numbers was to diverge south-west towards Bar-sur-Seine and Sens. So unequal a partition of forces seemed to court disaster. It is true that the allies had no magazines of supplies: they could not march in an undivided host through a hostile land where the scanty defenders themselves were nearly starving. If, however, they decided to move at all, it was needful to allot the more dangerous task to a powerful force. Above all, it was necessary to keep their main armies well in touch with one another and with the foe. Yet these obvious precautions were not taken. In truth, the separation of the allies was dictated more by political jealousy than by military motives. To these political affairs we must now allude; for they had no small effect in leading Napoleon on to an illusory triumph and an irretrievable overthrow. We will show their influence, first on the conduct of the allies, and then on the actions of Napoleon.

The alarm of Austria at the growing power of Russia and Prussia was becoming acute. She had drawn the sword only because Napoleon's resentment was more to be feared than Alexander's ambition. But all had changed since then. The warrior who, five months ago, still had his sword at the throat of Germany, was now being pursued across the dreary flats of Champagne. And his east-

ern rival, who then plaintively sued for Austria's aid, now showed a desire to establish Russian control over all the Polish lands, indemnifying Prussia for losses in that quarter by the acquisition of Saxony. Both of these changes would press heavily on Austria from the north ; and she was determined to prevent them as far as possible. Then there was the vexed question of the reconstruction of Germany, to which we shall recur later on. Smaller matters, involving the relations of the allies to Bernadotte, Denmark, and Switzerland further complicated the situation : but, above all, there was the problem of the future limits and form of government of France.

On that topic there were two chief parties : those who desired merely to clip Napoleon's wings, and those who sought to bring back France to her old boundaries. The Emperor Francis was still disposed to leave him the "natural frontiers," provided he gave up all control of Germany, Holland, and Italy. On the other side were the Czar and the forward wing of the Prussian patriots. Frederick William was more cautious, but in the main he deferred to the Czar's views on the boundary question. Still, so powerful was the influence of the Emperor Francis, Metternich, and Schwarzenberg, that the two parties were evenly balanced and beset by many suspicions and fears, until the arrival of the British Foreign Minister, Castlereagh, began to restore something like confidence and concord.

The British Cabinet had decided that, as none of our three envoys then at the allied headquarters had much diplomatic experience, our Minister should go in person to supervise the course of affairs. He reached headquarters in the third week of January, and what Thiers has called the proud simplicity of his conduct, contrasting as it did with the uneasy *finesse* of Metternich and Nesselrode, imparted to his counsels a weight which they merited from their disinterestedness. Great Britain was in a very strong position. She had borne the brunt of the struggle before the present coalition took shape : apart from some modest gains to Hanover, she was about to take no part in the ensuing territorial scramble : she even offered to give up many of her oceanic conquests, provided that the European settlement would be such as to guarantee a last-

ing peace.[1] And this, the British Minister came to see, could not be attained while Napoleon reigned over a Great France: the only sure pledge of peace would be the return of that country to its old frontiers, and preferably to its ancient dynasty.

On the question of boundaries the Czar's views were not clearly defined; they were personal rather than territorial. He was determined to get rid of Napoleon; but he would not, as yet, hear of the re-establishment of the Bourbons. He disliked that dynasty in general, and Louis XVIII. in particular. Bernadotte seemed to him a far fitter successor to Napoleon than the gouty old gentleman who for three and twenty years had been morosely flitting about Europe and issuing useless proclamations.

Here, indeed, was Napoleon's great chance: there was no man fit to succeed him, and he knew it. Scarcely anyone but Bernadotte himself agreed with the Czar as to the fitness of the choice just named. To the allies the Prince Royal of Sweden was suspect for his loiterings, and to Frenchmen he seemed a traitor. We find that Stein disagreed with the Czar on this point, and declared that the Bourbons were the only alternative to Napoleon. Assuredly, this was not because the great German loved that family, but simply because he saw that their very mediocrity would be a pledge that France would not again overflow her old limits and submerge Europe.

Here, then, was the strength of Castlereagh's position. Amidst the warping disputes and underhand intrigues his claims were clear, disinterested, and logically tenable. Besides, they were so urged as to calm the disputants. He quietly assured Metternich that Britain would resist the absorption of the whole of Poland and Saxony by Russia and Prussia; and on his side the Austrian statesman showed that he would not oppose the return of the Bourbons to France "from any family considerations," provided that that act came as the act of the French nation.[2] And this was a proviso on which our Government and Wellington already laid great stress.

[1] Metternich said of Castlereagh, "I can't praise him enough: his views are most peaceful, in our sense" (Fournier, p. 252).

[2] Castlereagh to Lord Liverpool, January 22nd and 30th, 1814.

Castlereagh's straightforward behaviour had an immense influence in leading Metternich to favour a more drastic solution of the French question than he had previously advocated. The Frankfurt proposals were now quietly waived, and Metternich came to see the need of withdrawing Belgium from France and intrusting it to the House of Orange. Still, the Austrian statesman was for concluding peace with Napoleon as soon as might be, though he confessed in his private letters that peace did not depend on the Châtillon parleys. Some persons, he wrote, wanted the Bourbons back : still more wished for a Regency (*i.e.*, Marie Louise as Regent for Napoleon II.) : others said : "Away with Napoleon, no peace is possible with him" : the masses cried out for peace, so as to end the whole affair : but added Metternich : "The riddle will be solved before or in Paris."[1] There spoke the discreet opportunist, always open to the logic of facts and the persuasion of Castlereagh.

Our Minister found the sovereigns of Russia and Prussia far less tractable ; and he only partially succeeded in lulling their suspicions that Metternich was hand and glove with Napoleon. So deep was the Czar's distrust of the Austrian statesman and commander-in-chief that he resolved to brush aside Metternich's diplomatic *pourparlers*, to push on rapidly to Paris, and there dictate peace.[2]

But it was just this eagerness of the Czar and the Prussians to reach Paris which kept alive Austrian fears. A complete triumph to their arms would seal the doom of Poland and Saxony ; and it has been thought that Schwarzenberg, who himself longed for peace, not only sought to save Austrian soldiers by keeping them back, but that at this time he did less than his duty in keeping touch with Blücher. Several times during the ensuing days the charge of treachery was hurled by the Prussians against the Austrians, and once at least by Frederick William himself. But it seems more probable that Met-

[1] Letter to Hudelist (February 3rd), in Fournier, p. 255.

[2] Stewart's Mem. of January 27, 1814, in "Castlereagh Papers," vol. ix., p. 535. On that day Hardenberg noted in his diary : "Discussion on the plan of operations, and misunderstandings. Intrigue of Stein to get the army straight to Paris, as the Czar wants. The Austrians oppose this : others don't know what they want" (Fournier, p. 361).

ternich and Schwarzenberg held their men back merely for prudential motives until the resumption of the negotiations with France should throw more light on the tangled political jungle through which the allies were groping. It is significant that while Schwarzenberg cautiously felt about for Napoleon's rearguard, of which he lost touch for two whole days, Metternich insisted that the peace Congress must be opened. Caulaincourt had for several days been waiting near the allied headquarters; and, said the Austrian Minister, it would be a breach of faith to put him off any longer now that Castlereagh had arrived. Only when Austria threatened to withdraw from the Coalition did Alexander concede this point, and then with a very bad grace; for the resumption of the negotiations virtually tied him to the neighbourhood of Châtillon-sur-Seine, the town fixed for the Congress, while Blücher was rapidly moving towards Paris with every prospect of snatching from the imperial brow the coveted laurel of a triumphal entry.

To prevent this interference with his own pet plans, the susceptible autocrat sent off from Bar-sur-Seine (February 7th) an order that Blücher was not to enter Paris, but must await the arrival of the sovereigns. The order was needless. Napoleon, goaded to fury by the demands which the allies on that very day formulated at Châtillon, flung himself upon Blücher and completely altered the whole military situation. But before describing this wonderful effort, we must take a glance at the diplomatic overtures which spurred him on.

The Congress of Châtillon opened on February 5th, and on that day Castlereagh gained his point, that questions about our maritime code should be completely banished from the discussions. Two days later the allies declared that France must withdraw within the boundaries of 1791, with the exception of certain changes made for mutual convenience and of some colonial retrocessions that England would grant to France. The French plenipotentiary, Caulaincourt, heard this demand with a quiet but strained composure: he reminded them that at Frankfurt they had proposed to leave France the Rhine and the Alps; he inquired what colonial sacrifices England was prepared

to make if she cooped up France in her old limits in Europe. To this our plenipotentiaries Aberdeen, Cathcart, and Stewart refused to reply until he assented to the present demand of the allies. He very properly refused to do this; and, despite his eagerness to come to an arrangement and end the misfortunes of France, referred the matter to his master.[1]

What were Napoleon's views on these questions? It is difficult to follow the workings of his mind before the time when Caulaincourt's despatch flashed the horrible truth upon him that he might, after all, leave France smaller and weaker than he found her. Then the lightnings of his wrath flash forth, and we see the tumult and anguish of that mighty soul: but previously the storm-wrack of passion and the cloud-bank of his clinging will are lit up by few gleams of the earlier piercing intelligence. On January the 4th he had written to Caulaincourt that the policy of England and the personal rancour of the Czar would drag Austria along. If Fortune betrayed him (Napoleon) he would give up the throne: never would he sign any shameful peace. But he added: "You must see what Metternich wants: it is not to Austria's interest to push matters to the end." In the accompanying instructions to his plenipotentiary, he seems to assent to the Alpine and Rhenish frontiers, but advises him to sign the preliminaries as vaguely as possible, "*as we have everything to gain by delay.*" The Rhine frontier must be so described as to leave France the Dutch fortresses: and Savona and Spezzia must also count as on the French side of the Alps. These, be it observed, are his notions when he has not heard of the defection of Murat, or the rejection of his Spanish bargain by the Cortès.

Twelve days later he proposes to Metternich an armistice, and again suggests that it is not to Austria's interest to press matters too far. But the allies are too wary to leave such a matter to Metternich: at Teplitz they bound

[1] Stewart's notes in "Castlereagh Papers," pp. 541–548. On February 17th Castlereagh promised to give back all our conquests in the West Indies, except Tobago, and to try to regain for France Guadaloupe and Cayenne from Sweden and Portugal; also to restore all the French possessions east of the Cape of Good Hope except the Iles de France (Mauritius) and de Bourbon (Fournier, p. 381).

themselves to common action; and the proposal only shows them the need of pushing on fast while their foe is still unprepared. Once more his old optimism asserts itself. The first French success, that at Brienne, leads him to hope that the allies will now be ready to make peace. Even after the disaster at La Rothière, he believes that the mere arrival of Caulaincourt at the allied headquarters will foment the discords which there exist.[1] Then, writing amidst the unspeakable miseries at Troyes (February 4th), he upbraids Caulaincourt for worrying him about "powers and instructions when it is still doubtful if the enemy wants to negotiate. His terms, it seems, are determined on beforehand. As soon as you have them, you have the power to accept them or to refer them to me within twenty-four hours."

After midnight, he again directs him to accept the terms, if acceptable: "in the contrary case we will run the risks of a battle; even the loss of Paris, and all that will ensue." Later on that day he allows Maret to send a despatch giving Caulaincourt "carte blanche" to conclude peace.[2] But the plenipotentiary dared not take on himself the responsibility of accepting the terms offered by the allies two days later. The last despatch was too vague to enable him to sign away many thousands of square miles of territory: it contradicted the tenor of Napoleon's letters, which empowered him to assent to nothing less than the Frankfurt terms. And thus was to slip away one more chance of bringing about peace — a peace that would strip the French Empire of frontier lands and alien peoples, but leave it to the peasants' ruler, Napoleon.

In truth, the Emperor's words and letters breathed nothing but warlike resolve. Famine and misery accompany him on his march to Nogent, and there, on the 7th, he hears tidings that strike despair to every heart but his. An Anglo-German force is besieging the staunch old Carnot in Antwerp; Bülow has entered Brussels; Belgium is

[1] Letters of January 31st and February 2nd to Joseph.

[2] Printed in Napoleon's "Corresp." of February 17th. I cannot agree with Ernouf, "Vie de Maret," and Fournier, that Caulaincourt could have signed peace merely on Maret's "carte blanche" despatch. The man who had been cruelly duped by Napoleon in the D'Enghien affair naturally wanted an explicit order now.

lost: Macdonald's weak corps is falling back on Epernay, hard pressed by Yorck, while Blücher is heading for Paris. Last of all comes on the morrow Caulaincourt's despatch announcing that the allies now insist on France returning to the limits of 1791.

Never, surely, since the time of Job did calamity shower her blows so thickly on the head of mortal man: and never were they met with less resignation and more undaunted defiance. After receiving the black budget of news the Emperor straightway shut himself up. For some time his Marshals left him alone: but, as Caulaincourt's courier was waiting for the reply, Berthier and Maret ventured to intrude on his grief. He tossed them the letter containing the allied terms. A long silence ensued while they awaited his decision. As he spoke not a word they begged him to give way and grant peace to France. Then his pent-up feelings burst forth: "What, you would have me sign a treaty like that, and trample under foot my coronation oath! Unheard-of disasters may have snatched from me the promise to renounce my conquests: but, give up those made before me — never! God keep me from such a disgrace. Reply to Caulaincourt since you wish it, but tell him that I reject this treaty. I prefer to run the uttermost risks of war." He threw himself on his camp bed. Maret waited by his side, and gained from him in calmer moments permission to write to Caulaincourt in terms that allowed the negotiation to proceed. At dawn on the 9th Maret came back hoping to gain assent to despatches that he had been drawing up during the night. To his surprise he found the Emperor stretched out over large charts, compass in hand. "Ah, there you are," was his greeting; "now it's a question of very different matters. I am going to beat Blücher: if I succeed, the state of affairs will entirely change, and then we will see."

The tension of his feelings at this time, when rage and desperation finally gave way to a fixed resolve to stake all on a blow at Blücher's flank, finds expression in a phrase which has been omitted from the official correspondence.[1] In one of the five letters which he wrote to

[1] Given by Ducasse, "Les Rois Frères de Napoléon," p. 64.

Joseph on the 9th, he remarked: "Pray the Madonna of armies to be for us: Louis, who is a saint, may engage to give her a lighted candle." A curiously sarcastic touch, probably due to his annoyance at the *Misereres* and "prayers forty hours long" at Paris which he bade his Ministers curtail. Or was it a passing flash of that religious sentiment which he professed in his declining years?

He certainly counted on victory over Blücher. A week earlier, he had foreseen the chance that that leader would expose his flank: on the 7th he charged Marmont to occupy Sézanne, where he would be strongly supported; on the afternoon of the 9th he set out from Nogent to reinforce his Marshal; and on the morrow Marmont and Ney fell upon one of Blücher's scattered columns at Champaubert. It was a corps of Russians, less than 5,000 strong, with no horsemen and but twenty-four cannon; the Muscovites offered a stout resistance, but only 1,500 escaped.[1] Blücher's line of march was now cut in twain. He himself was at Vertus with the last column; his foremost corps, under Sacken, was west of Montmirail, while Yorck was far to the north of that village observing Macdonald's movements along the Château-Thierry road.

The Emperor with 20,000 men might therefore hope to destroy these corps piecemeal. Leaving Marmont along with Grouchy's horse to hold Blücher in check on the east, he struck westwards against Sacken's Russians near Montmirail. The shock was terrible; both sides were weary with night marches on miry roads, along which cannon had to be dragged by double teams: yet, though footsore and worn with cold and hunger, the men fought with sustained fury, the French to stamp out the barbarous invaders who had wasted their villages, the Russians to hold their position until Yorck's Prussians should stretch a succouring hand from the north. Many a time did the French rush at the village of Marchais held by Sacken: they were repeatedly repulsed, until, as darkness came on, Ney and Mortier with the Guard stormed a large farmhouse on their left. Then, at last, Sacken's men

[1] Häusser, p. 503. According to Napoleon, 6,000 men and forty cannon were captured!

drew off in sore plight north-west across the fields, where Yorck's tardy advent alone saved them from destruction. The next day completed their discomfiture. Napoleon and Mortier pursued both allied corps to Château-Thierry, and, after sharp fighting in the streets of that place, drove them across the Marne. The townsfolk hailed the advent of their Emperor with unbounded joy: they had believed him to be at Troyes, beaten and dispirited; and here he was delivering them from the brutal licence of the eastern soldiery. Nothing was impossible to him.

Next it was Blücher's turn. Leaving Mortier to pursue the fugitives of Sacken and Yorck along the Soissons road, Napoleon left Château-Thierry late at night on the 13th, following the mass of his troops to reinforce Marmont. That Marshal had yielded ground to Blücher's desperate efforts, but was standing at bay at Vauchamps, when Napoleon drew near to the scene of the unequal fight. Suddenly a mighty shout of "Vive l'Empereur" warned the assailants that they now had to do with Napoleon. Yet no precipitation weakened the Emperor's blow: not until his cavalry greatly outnumbered that of the allies did he begin the chief attack. Stoutly it was beaten off by the allied squares: but Drouot's artillery ploughed through their masses, while swarms of horsemen were ready to open out those ghastly furrows. There was nothing for it but retreat, and that across open country, where the charges and the pounding still went on. But nothing could break that stubborn infantry: animated by their leader the Prussians and Russians plodded steadily eastwards, until, as darkness drew on, they found Grouchy's horse barring the road before Etoges. "Forward" was still the veteran's cry: and through the cavalry they cut their way: through hostile footmen that had stolen round to the village they also burst, and at last found shelter near Bergères. "Words fail me," wrote Colonel Hudson Lowe, "to express my admiration at their undaunted and manly behaviour."

This gallant retreat shed lustre over the rank and file. But the sins of the commanders had cost the allies dear. In four days the army of Silesia lost fully 15,000 men, and its corps were driven far asunder by Napoleon's

incursion. His brilliant moves and trenchant strokes astonished the world. With less than 30,000 men he had burst into Blücher's line of march, and scattered in flight 50,000 warriors advancing on Paris in full assurance of victory. It was not chance, but science, that gave him these successes. Acting from behind the screen of the Seine, he had thrown his small but undivided force against scattered portions of a superior force. It was the strategy of Lonato and Castiglione over again ; and the enthusiasm of those days bade fair to revive.

His men, who previously had tramped downheartedly over wastes of snow and miry cross-roads, now marched with head erect as in former days ; the villagers, far from being cowed by the brutalities of the Cossacks, formed bands to hang upon the enemies' rear and entrap their foragers. Above all, Paris was herself once more. Before he began these brilliant moves, he had to upbraid Cambacérès for his unmanly conduct. "I see that instead of sustaining the Empress, you are discouraging her. Why lose your head thus? What mean these *Miserere* and these prayers of forty hours? Are you going mad at Paris?" Now the capital again breathed defiance to the foe, and sent the Emperor National Guards. Many of these from Brittany, it is true, came "in round hats and *sabots*": they had no knapsacks: but they had guns, and they fought.

Could he have pursued Blücher on the morrow he might probably have broken up even that hardy infantry, now in dire straits for want of supplies. But bad news came to hand from the south-west. Under urgent pressure from the Czar, Schwarzenberg had pushed forward two columns from Troyes towards Paris: one of them had seized the bridge over the Seine at Bray, a day's march below Nogent: the other was nearing Fontainebleau. Napoleon was furious at the neglect of Victor to guard the crossing at Bray, and reluctantly turned away from Blücher to crush these columns. His men marched or were carried in vehicles, by way of Meaux and Guignes, to reinforce Victor: on the 17th they drove back the outposts of Schwarzenberg's centre, while Macdonald and Oudinot marched towards Nogent to threaten his right.

These rapid moves alarmed the Austrian commander, whose left, swung forward on Fontainebleau, was in some danger of being cut off. He therefore sued for an armistice. It was refused; and the request drew from Napoleon a letter to his brother Joseph full of contempt for the allies (February 18th). "It is difficult," he writes, "to be so cowardly as that! He [Schwarzenberg] had constantly, and in the most insulting terms, refused a suspension of arms of any kind, . . . and yet these wretches at the first check fall on their knees. I will grant no armistice till my territory is clear of them." He adds that he now expected to gain the "natural frontiers" offered by the allies at Frankfurt — the minimum that he could accept with honour; and he closes with these memorable words, which flash a searchlight on his pacific professions of thirteen months later: "If I had agreed to the old boundaries, I should have rushed to arms two years later, telling the nation that I had signed not a peace, but a capitulation."[1]

The events of the 18th strengthened his resolve. He then attacked the Crown Prince of Würtemberg on the north side of the Seine, opposite Montereau, overthrew him by the weight of the artillery of the Guard, whereupon a brilliant charge of Pajol's horsemen wrested the bridge from the South Germans and restored to the Emperor the much-needed crossing over the river. Napoleon's activity on that day was marvellous. He wrote or dictated eleven despatches, six of them long before dawn, gave instructions to an officer who was to encourage Eugène to hold firm in Italy, fought a battle, directed the aim of several cannon, and wound up the day by severe rebukes to Marshal Victor and two generals for their recent blunders. Thus, on a brief winter's day, he fills the *rôle* of Emperor, organizer, tactician, cannoneer, and martinet; in fact, he crowns it by pardoning Victor, when that brave man vows that he cannot live away from the army, and will fight as a common soldier among the Guards: he then and there assigns to him two divisions of the Guard. To the artillerymen the *camaraderie* of the Emperor gave a new zest: and when they ventured to reproach him for

[1] Letter of February 18th, 1814.

thus risking his life, he replied with a touch of the fatalism which enthralls a soldier's mind: "Ah! don't fear: the ball is not cast that will kill me."

Yes: Napoleon displayed during these last ten days a fertility of resource, a power to drive back the tide of events, that have dazzled posterity, as they dismayed his foes. We may seek in vain for a parallel, save perhaps in the careers of Hannibal and Frederick. Alexander the Great's victories were won over Asiatics: Cæsar's magnificent rally of his wavering bands against the onrush of the Nervii was but one effort of disciplined valour crushing the impetuosity of the barbarian. Marlborough and Wellington often triumphed over great odds and turned the course of history. But their star had never set so low as that of Napoleon's after La Rothière, and never did it rush to the zenith with a splendour like that which blinded the trained hosts of Blücher and Schwarzenberg. Whatever the mistakes of these leaders, and they were great, there is something that defies analysis in Napoleon's sudden transformation of his beaten dispirited band into a triumphant array before which four times their numbers sought refuge in retreat. But it is just this transcendent quality that adds a charm to the character and career of Napoleon. Where analysis fails, there genius begins.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE FIRST ABDICATION

It now remained to be seen whether Napoleon would make a wise use of his successes. While the Grand Army drew in its columns behind the sheltering line of the Seine at Troyes, the French Emperor strove to reap in diplomacy the fruits of his military prowess. In brief, he sought to detach Austria from the Coalition. From Nogent he wrote, on the 21st, to the Emperor Francis, dwelling on the impolicy of Austria continuing the war. Why should she subordinate her policy to that of England and to the personal animosities of the Czar? Why should she see her former Belgian provinces handed over to a Protestant Dutch Prince about to be allied with the House of Brunswick by marriage? France would never give up Belgium; and he, as French Emperor, would never sign a peace that would drive her from the Rhine and exclude her from the circle of the Great Powers. But if Austria really wished for the equilibrium of Europe, he (Napoleon) was ready to forget the past and make peace on the basis of the Frankfurt terms.[1]

Had these offers been rather less exacting, and reached the allied headquarters a week earlier, they might have led to the break up of the Coalition. For the political situation of the allies had been even more precarious than that of their armies. The pretensions of the Czar had excited indignation and alarm. Swayed to and fro

[1] At Elba Napoleon told Colonel Campbell that he would have made peace at Châtillon had not England insisted on his giving up Antwerp, and that England was therefore the cause of the war continuing. This letter, however, proves that he was as set on retaining Mainz as Antwerp. Caulaincourt then wished him to make peace while he could do so with credit ("Castlereagh Papers," vol. ix., p. 287).

between the counsels of his old tutor, Laharpe, now again at his side, and his own autocratic instincts, he declared that he would push on to Paris, consult the will of the French people by a plébiscite, and abide by its decision, even if it gave a new lease of power to Napoleon. But side by side with this democratic proposal came another of a more despotic type, that the military Governor of Paris must be a Russian officer.

The amusement caused by these odd notions was overshadowed by alarm. Metternich, Castlereagh, and Hardenberg saw in them a ruse for foisting on France either Bernadotte, or an orientalized Republic, or a Muscovite version of the Treaty of Tilsit. Then again, on February 9th, Alexander sent a mandate to the plenipotentiaries at Châtillon, requesting that their sessions should be suspended, though he had recently agreed at Langres to enter into negotiations with France, provided that the military operations were not suspended. Evidently, then, he was bent on forcing the hands of his allies, and Austria feared that he might at the end of the war insist on her taking Alsace, as a set-off to the loss of Eastern Galicia which he wished to absorb. So keen was the jealousy thus aroused, that at Troyes Metternich and Hardenberg signed a secret agreement to prevent the Czar carrying matters with a high hand at Paris (February 14th); and on the same day they sent him a stiff Note requesting the resumption of the negotiations with Napoleon. Indeed, Austria formally threatened to withdraw her troops from the war, unless he limited his aims to the terms propounded by the allies at Châtillon. Alexander at first refused; but the news of Blücher's disasters shook his determination, and he assented on that day, provided that steps were at once taken to lighten the pressure on the Russian corps serving under Blücher. Thus, by February 14th, the crisis was over.[1] Schwarzenberg cautiously pushed on three columns to attract the thunderbolts that otherwise would have destroyed the Silesian Army root and branch; and he succeeded. True, his vanguard was beaten at Montereau; but, by drawing Napoleon south and then east of the Seine,

[1] Fournier, pp. 132–137, 284–294, 299.

he gave time to Blücher to strengthen his shattered array and resume the offensive. Meanwhile Bülow, with the northern army, began to draw near to the scene of action, and on the 23rd the allies took the wise step of assigning his corps, along with those of Winzingerode, Woronzoff, and Strogonoff, to the Prussian veteran. The last three corps were withdrawn from the army of Bernadotte, and that prince was apprised of the fact by the Czar in a rather curt letter.

The diplomatic situation had also cleared up before Napoleon's letter reached the Emperor Francis. The negotiations with Caulaincourt were resumed at Châtillon on February the 17th ; and there is every reason to think that Austria, England, Prussia, and perhaps even Russia would now gladly have signed peace with Napoleon on the basis of the French frontiers of 1791, provided that he renounced all claims to interference in the affairs of Europe outside those limits.[1]

These demands would certainly have been accepted by the French plenipotentiary had he listened to his own pacific promptings. But he was now in the most painful position. Maret had informed him, the day after Montmirail, that Napoleon was set on keeping the Rhenish and Alpine frontiers.[2] He could, therefore, do nothing but temporize. He knew how precarious was the military supremacy just snatched by his master, and trusted that a few days more would bring wisdom before it was too late. But his efforts for delay were useless.

While he was marking time, Napoleon was sending him despatches instinct with pride. "I have made 30,000 to 40,000 prisoners," he wrote on the 17th : "I have taken 200 cannon, a great number of generals, and destroyed several armies, almost without striking a blow. I yesterday checked Schwarzenberg's army, which I hope to destroy before it recrosses my frontier." And two days later, after hearing the allied terms, he wrote that they would make the blood of every Frenchman boil with indignation, and that he would dictate *his* ultimatum at

[1] See Metternich's letter to Stadion of February 15th in Fournier, pp. 319, 327.

[2] Houssaye, p. 102.

Troyes or Châtillon. Of course, Caulaincourt kept these diatribes to himself, but his painfully constrained demeanour betrayed the secret that he longed for peace and that his hands were tied.

On all sides proofs were to be seen that Napoleon would never give up Belgium and the Rhine frontier. When the allies (at the suggestion of Schwarzenberg, and *with the approval of the Czar*) sued for an armistice, he forbade his envoys to enter into any parleys until the allies agreed to accept the "natural frontiers" as the basis for a peace, and retired in the meantime on Alsace, Lorraine, and Holland.[1] These last conditions he agreed three days later to relax; but on the first point he was inexorable, and he knew that the military commissioners appointed to arrange the truce had no power to agree to the *political* article which he made a *sine quâ non*.

Accordingly, no armistice was concluded, and his unbending attitude made a bad impression on the Emperor Francis, who, on the 27th, replied to his son-in-law in terms which showed that his blows were welding the Coalition more firmly together.[2]

In fact, while the plenipotentiaries at Châtillon were exchanging empty demands, a most important compact was taking form at Chaumont: it was dated from the 1st of March, but definitively signed on the 9th. Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia thereby bound themselves not to treat singly with France for peace, but to continue the war until France was brought back to her old frontiers, and the complete independence of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and Spain was secured. Each of the four Powers must maintain 150,000 men in the field (exclusive of garrisons); and Britain agreed to aid her allies with equal yearly subsidies amounting in all to £5,000,000 for the year 1814.[3] The treaty would be only defensive

[1] Instructions of February 24th to Flahaut, "Corresp.," No. 21359; Hardenberg's "Diary," in Fournier, pp. 363–364.

[2] Fournier, pp. 170, 385.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 178–181, 304; Martens, vol. ix., p. 683. Castlereagh, vol. ix., p. 336, calls it "my treaty," and adds that England was practically supplying 300,000 men to the Coalition. One secret article invited Spain and Sweden to accede to the treaty; another stated that Germany was to consist of a federation of sovereign princes, that Holland must receive a

if Napoleon accepted the allied terms formulated at Châtillon: otherwise it would be offensive and hold good, if need be, for twenty years.

Undoubtedly this compact was largely the work of Castlereagh, whose tact and calmness had done wonders in healing schisms; but so intimate a union could never have been formed among previously discordant allies but for their overmastering fear of Napoleon. Such a treaty was without parallel in European history; and the stringency of its clauses serves as the measure of the prowess and perversity of the French Emperor. It is puerile to say, as Mollien does, that England bribed the allies to this last effort. Experiences of the last months had shown them that peace could not be durable as long as Napoleon remained in a position to threaten Germany. Even now they were ready to conclude it with Napoleon on the basis of the old frontiers of France, provided that he assented before the 11th of March; but the most pacific of their leaders saw that the more they showed their desire for peace, the more they strengthened Napoleon's resolve to have it only on terms which they saw to be fraught with future danger.[1]

While the conferences at Châtillon followed one another in fruitless succession, Blücher, with 48,000 effectives, was once more resuming the offensive. Napoleon heard the news at Troyes (February 25th). He was surprised at the veteran's temerity: he had pictured him crushed and helpless beyond Chalons, and had cherished the hope of destroying Schwarzenberg. — "If," he wrote to Clarke on the morrow, "I had had a pontoon bridge,

"suitable" military frontier, and that Italy, Spain, and Switzerland must be independent, that is, of France; a third bound the allies to keep their armies on a war footing for a suitable time after the peace.

[1] See his instructions of March 2nd to Caulaincourt: "Nothing will bring France to do anything that degrades her national character and deposes her from the rank she has held in the world for centuries." But it was precisely that rank which the allies were resolved to assign to her, neither more nor less. The joint allied note of February 29th to the negotiators at Châtillon bade them "announce to the French negotiator that you are ready to discuss, in a spirit of conciliation, every modification that he might be authorized to propose"; but that any essential departure from the terms already proposed by them must lead to a rupture of the negotiations.

the war would be over, and Schwarzenberg's army would no longer exist. . . . For want of boats, I could not pass the Seine at the necessary points. It was not 50 boats that I needed, only 20." — With this characteristic outburst against his War Minister, whose neglect to send up twenty boats from Paris had changed the world's history, the Emperor turned aside to overwhelm Blücher. The Prussian commander was near the junction of the Seine and the Aube; and seemed to offer his flank as unguardedly as three weeks before.

Napoleon sent Ney, Victor, and Arrighi northwards to fall on his rear, and on the 27th repaired to Arcis-sur-Aube to direct the operations. What, then, was his annoyance when, in pursuance of the allied plan formed on the 23rd, Blücher skilfully retired northwards, withdrew beyond the Marne and broke the bridges behind him. Then, after failing to drive Marmont and Mortier from Meaux and the line of the Ourcq, the Prussian leader marched towards Soissons, near which town he expected to meet the northern army of the allies. For some hours he was in grave danger: Marmont hung on his rear, and Napoleon with 35,000 hardy troops was preparing to turn his right flank. In fact, had he not broken the bridge over the Marne at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and thereby delayed the Emperor thirty-six hours, he would probably have been crushed before he could cross the River Aisne. His men were dead beat by marching night and day over roads first covered by snow and now deep in slush: for a week they had had no regular rations, and great was their joy when, at the close of the 2nd, they drew near to the 42,000 troops that Bülow and Winzingerode mustered near the banks of the Aisne and Vesle.

On that day Napoleon, when delayed at La Ferté, conceived the daring idea of rushing on the morrow after Blücher, who was "very embarrassed in the mire," and then of carrying the war into Lorraine, rescuing the garrisons of Verdun, Toul, and Metz, and rousing the peasantry of the east of France against the invaders. It mattered not that Schwarzenberg had dealt Oudinot and Gérard a severe check at Bar-sur-Aube, as soon as Napoleon's back was turned. That cautious leader would be

certain, he thought, to beat a retreat towards the Rhine as soon as his rear was threatened ; and Napoleon pictured France rising as in 1793, shaking off her invaders and dictating a glorious peace.

Far different was the actual situation. Blücher was not to be caught ; a sharp frost on the 3rd improved the roads ; and his complete junction with the northern army was facilitated by the surrender of Soissons on that same afternoon. This fourth-rate fortress was ill-prepared to withstand an attack ; and, after a short bombardment by Winzingerode, two allied officers made their way to the Governor, praised his bravery, pointed out the uselessness of further resistance, and offered to allow the garrison to march out with the honours of war and rejoin the Emperor, where they could fight to more advantage. The Governor, who bore the ill-starred name of Moreau, finally gave way, and his troops, nearly all Poles, marched out at 4 P.M., furious at his "treason" ; for the distant thunder of Marmont's cannon was already heard on the side of Oulchy. Rumour said that they were the Emperor's cannon, but rumour lied. At dawn Napoleon's troops had begun to cross the temporary bridge over the Marne, thirty-five miles away ; but by great exertions his outposts on that evening reached Rocourt, only some twenty miles south of Soissons.[1]

The fact deserves notice : for it disposes of the strange statement of Thiers that the surrender of Soissons was, next to Waterloo, the most fatal event in the annals of France. The gifted historian, as also, to some extent, M. Houssaye, assumed that, had Soissons held out, Blücher and Bülow could not have united their forces. But Bülow had not relied solely on the bridge at Soissons for the union of the armies ; on the 2nd he had thrown a bridge over the Aisne at Vailly, some distance above that city, and another on the 3rd near to its eastern suburb.[2] It is clear, then, that the two armies, numbering in all over 100,000 men, could have joined long before Napo-

[1] Letters of March 2nd, 3rd, 4th, to Clarke.

[2] Houssaye, p. 156, note. So too Müffling, "Aus meinem Leben," shows that Blücher could have crossed the Aisne there or at Pontavaire or Berry-au-Bac.

leon, Marmont, and Mortier were in a position to attack. Before the Emperor heard of the surrender, he had marched to Fismes, and had detached Corbineau to occupy Rheims, evidently with the aim of cutting Blücher's communications with Schwarzenberg, and opening up the way to Verdun and Metz.

For that plan was now his dominant aim, while the repulse of Blücher was chiefly of importance because it would enable him to stretch a hand eastwards to his beleaguered garrisons.[1] But Blücher was not to be thus disposed of. While withdrawing from Soissons to the natural fortress of Laon, he heard that Napoleon had crossed the Aisne at Berry-au-Bac, and was making for Craonne. Above that town there rises a long narrow ridge or plateau, which Blücher ordered his Russian corps to occupy. There was fought one of the bloodiest battles of the war (March 7th). The aim of the allies was to await the French attack on the plateau, while 10,000 horsemen and sixty guns worked round and fell on their rear. The plan failed, owing to a mistake in the line of march of this flanking force: and the battle resolved itself into a soldiers' fight. Five times did Ney lead his braves up those slopes, only to be hurled back by the dogged Muscovites. But the Emperor now arrived; a sixth attack by the cavalry and artillery of the Guard battered in the defence; and Blücher, hearing that the flank move had failed, ordered a retreat on Laon. This confused and desperate fight cost both sides about 7,000 men, nearly a fourth of the numbers engaged. Victor, Grouchy, and six French generals were among the wounded.[2]

Nevertheless, Napoleon struggled on: he called up Marmont and Mortier, gave out that he was about to receive other large reinforcements, and bade his garrisons in Belgium and Lorraine fall on the rear of the foe. One more victory, he thought, would end the war, or at least lower the demands of the allies. It was not to be. Blücher and Bülow held the strong natural citadel of Laon; and all Napoleon's efforts on March the 9th and 10th failed to storm the southern approaches. Marmont

[1] See Napoleon's letters to Clarke of March 4th–6th.
[2] Houssaye, pp. 176–188.

fared no better on the east; and when, at nightfall, the weary French fell back, the Prussians resolved to try a night attack on Marmont's corps, which was far away from the main body. Never was a surprise more successful; Marmont was quite off his guard; horse and foot fled in wild confusion, leaving 2,500 prisoners and forty-five cannon in the hands of the victorious Yorck. Could the allies have pressed home their advantage, the result must have been decisive; but Blücher had fallen ill, and a halt was called.[1]

Alone, among the leaders in this campaign, the Emperor remained unbroken. All the allied leaders had at one time or another bent under his blows; and the French Marshals seemed doomed, as in 1813, to fail wherever their Emperor was not. Ney, Victor, and Mortier had again evinced few of the qualities of a commander, except bravery. Augereau was betraying softness and irresolution in the Lyonnais in front of a smaller Austrian force. Suchet and Davoust were shut up in Catalonia and Hamburg. St. Cyr and Vandamme were prisoners. Soult had kept a bold front near Bayonne: but now news was to hand that Wellington had surprised and routed him at Orthez. On the Seine, Macdonald and Oudinot failed to hold Troyes against the masses of Schwarzenberg. Of all the French Marshals, Marmont had distinguished himself the most in this campaign, and now at Laon he had been caught napping. Yet, while all others failed, Napoleon seemed invincible. Even after Marmont's disaster, the allies forbore to attack the chief; and, just as a lion that has been beaten off by a herd of buffaloes stalks away, mangled but full of fight and unmolested, so the Emperor drew off in peace towards Soissons. Thence he marched on Rheims, gained a victory over a Russian division there, and hoped to succour his Lorraine garrisons, when, on the 17th, the news of Schwarzenberg's advance towards Paris led him southwards once more.

[1] Müffling says that Blücher and Gneisenau feared an attack by *Bernadotte* on their rear. Napoleon on February 25th advised Joseph to try and gain over that prince, who had some very suspicious relations with the French General Maison in Belgium. Probably Gneisenau wished to spare his men for political reasons.

Yielding to the remonstrances of the Czar, the Austrian leader had purposed to march on the French capital, if everything went well; but he once more drew back on receiving news of Napoleon's advance against his right flank. While preparing to retire towards Brienne, he heard that his great antagonist had crossed that river at Plancy with less than 20,000 troops. To retrace his steps, fall upon this handful of weary men with 100,000, and drive them into the river, was not a daring conception: but so accustomed were the allies to dalliance and delay that a thrill of surprise ran through the host when he began to call up its retiring columns for a fight.[1]

Napoleon also was surprised: he believed the Grand Army to be in full retreat, and purposed then to dash on Vitry and Verdun.[2] But the allies gave him plenty of time to draw up Macdonald's and Oudinot's corps, while they themselves were still so widely sundered as at first scarcely to stay his onset. The fighting behind Arcis was desperate: Napoleon exposed his person freely to snatch victory from the deepening masses in front. At one time a shell burst in front of him, and his staff shivered as they saw his figure disappear in the cloud of smoke and dust; but he arose unhurt, mounted another charger and pressed on the fight. It was in vain: he was compelled to draw back his men to the town (March 20th). On the morrow a bold attack by Schwarzenberg could have overwhelmed Napoleon's 30,000 men; but his bold front imposed on the Austrian leader, while the French were drawn across the river, only the rearguard suffering heavily from the belated attack of the allies. With the loss of 4,000 men, Napoleon fell back northwards into the wasted plains of Sézanne. Hope now vanished from every breast

[1] Bernhardi's "Toll," vol. iv., p. 697. Lord Burghersh wrote from Troyes (March 12th): "I am convinced this army will not be risked in a general action. . . . S. would almost wish to be back upon the Rhine." So again on the 19th he wrote to Colonel Hudson Lowe from Pougy: "I cannot say much for our activity; I am unable to explain the causes of our apathy — the facts are too evident to be disputed. We have been ten days at Troyes, one at Pont-sur-Seine, two at Arcis, and are now at this place. We go to-morrow to Brienne" ("Unpublished Mems. of Sir H. Lowe"). Stewart wittily said that Napoleon came to Arcis to feel Schwarzenberg's pulse.

[2] Letters of March 20th to Clarke.

but his. And surely if human weakness had ever found a place in that fiery soul, it might now have tempted him to sue for peace. He had flung himself first north, then south, in order to keep for France the natural frontiers that he might have had as a present last November; he had failed; and now he might with honour accept the terms of the victors. But once more he was too late.

The negotiations at Châtillon had ended on March 19th, that is, nine days later than had been originally fixed by the allies. The extension of time was due mainly to their regard and pity for Caulaincourt; and, indeed, he was in the most pitiable position, a plenipotentiary without full powers, a Minister kept partly in the dark by his sovereign, and a patriot unable to rescue his beloved France from the abyss towards which Napoleon's infatuation was hurrying her. He knew the resolve of the allies far better than his master's intentions. It was from Lord Aberdeen that he heard of the failure of the parleys for an armistice: from him also he learnt that Napoleon had written a "passionate" letter to Kaiser Francis, and he expressed satisfaction that the reply was firm and decided.[1] His private intercourse at Châtillon with the British plenipotentiaries was frank and friendly, as also with Stadion. He received frequent letters from Metternich, advising him quickly to come to terms with the allies;[2] and the Austrian Minister sent Prince Esterhazy to warn him that the allies would never recede from their demand of the old frontiers for France, not even if the fortune of war drove them across the Rhine for a time. "Is there, then, no means to enlighten Napoleon as to his true situation, or to save him if he persists in destroying himself? Has he irrevocably staked his own and his son's fate on the last cannon?" — Let Napoleon, then, accept the allied proposal by sending a counter-project, differing only very slightly from theirs, and peace would be made.[3] Caulaincourt needed no spur. "He works tooth and nail for a

[1] "Castlereagh Papers," vol. ix., pp. 325, 332.

[2] These letters were written in pairs — the one being official, the other confidential. Caulaincourt's replies show that he appreciated them highly (see Fain, Appendix).

[3] From Caulaincourt's letter of March 3rd to Napoleon; Bignon, vol. xiii., p. 379.

peace," wrote Stewart, "as far as depends on him. He dreads Bonaparte's successes even more than ours, lest they should make him more impracticable."[1]

But, unfortunately, his latest and most urgent appeal to the Emperor reached the latter just after the Pyrrhic victory at Craonne, which left him more stubborn than ever. Far from meeting the allies half-way, he let fall words that bespoke only injured pride: "If one must receive lashes," he said within hearing of the courier, "it is not for me to offer my back to them." On the morrow he charged Maret to reply to his distressed plenipotentiary that he (Napoleon) knew best what the situation demanded; the demand of the allies that France should retire within her old frontiers was only their *first word:* Caulaincourt must get to know their ultimatum: if this was their ultimatum, he must reject it. He (Napoleon) would possibly give up Dutch Brabant and the fortresses of Wesel, Castel (opposite Mainz), and Kehl, but would make no substantial changes on the Frankfurt terms. Still, Caulaincourt struggled on. When the session of March 10th was closing, he produced a declaration offering to give up all Napoleon's claims to control lands beyond the natural limits.

The others divined that it was his own handiwork, drawn up in order to spin out the negotiations and leave his master a few days of grace.[2] They respected his intentions, and nine days of grace were gained; but the only answer that Napoleon vouchsafed to Caulaincourt's appeals was the missive of March 17th from Rheims: "I have received your letters of the 13th. I charge the Duke of Bassano to answer them in detail. I give you directly the power to make the concessions which would be indispensable to keep up the activity of the negotiations, and to get to know at last the ultimatum of the allies, it being well understood that the treaty would have for result the evacuation of our territory and the release

[1] "Castlereagh Papers," vol. ix., p. 555.

[2] "Castlereagh Papers," vol. ix., pp. 335, 559. Caulaincourt's project of March 15th much resembled that dictated by Napoleon three days later; Austria was to have Venetia as far as the Adige, the kingdom of Italy to go to Eugène, and the Duchy of Warsaw to the King of Saxony, etc. The allies rejected it (Fain, p. 388).

of all prisoners on both sides." The instructions which he charged the Duke of Bassano to send to Caulaincourt were such as a victor might have dictated. The allies must evacuate his territory and give up all the fortresses as soon as the preliminaries of peace were signed: if the negotiations were to break off they had better break off on this question. He himself would cease to control lands beyond the natural frontiers, and would recognize the independence of Holland: as regards Belgium, he would refuse to cede it to a prince of the House of Orange, but he hinted that it might well go to a French prince as an indemnity — evidently Joseph Bonaparte was meant. If this concession were made, he expected that all the French colonies, including the Ile de France, would be restored. Nothing definite was said about the Rhine frontier.

The courier who carried these proposals from Rheims to Châtillon was twice detained by the Russians, and had not reached the town when the Congress came to an end (March 19th). Their only importance, therefore, is to show that, despite all the warnings in which the Prague negotiations were so fruitful, Napoleon clung to the same threatening and dilatory tactics which had then driven Austria into the arms of his foes. He still persists in looking on the time limit of the allies as meaningless, on their ultimatum as their *first word*, from which they will soon shuffle away under the pressure of his prowess — and this, too, when Caulaincourt is daily warning him that the hours are numbered, that nothing will change the resolve of his foes, and that their defeats only increase their exasperation against him.

If anything could have increased this exasperation, it was the discovery that he was playing with them all the time. On the 20th the allied scouts brought to headquarters a despatch written by Maret the day before to Caulaincourt which contained this damning sentence: "The Emperor's desires remain entirely vague on everything relating to the delivering up of the strongholds, Antwerp, Mayence, and Alessandria, if you should be obliged to consent to these cessions, as he has the intention, even after the ratification of the treaty, to take counsel from the military situation of affairs. Wait for

the last moment."[1] Peace, then, was to be patched up for Napoleon's convenience and broken by him at the first seasonable opportunity. Is it surprising that on that same day the Ministers of the Powers decided to have no more negotiations with Napoleon, and that Metternich listened not unfavourably to the emissary of the Bourbons, the Count de Vitrolles, whom he had previously kept at arm's length?

In truth, Napoleon was now about to stake everything on a plan from which other leaders would have recoiled, but which, in his eyes, promised a signal triumph. This was to rally the French garrisons in Lorraine and throw himself on Schwarzenberg's rear. It was, indeed, his only remaining chance. With his band of barely 40,000 men, kept up to that number by the arrival of levies that impaired its solidity, he could scarcely hope to beat back the dense masses now marshalled behind the Aube, the Seine, and the Marne.

A glance at the map will show that behind those rivers the allies could creep up within striking distance of Paris, while from his position north of the Aube he could attack them only by crossing one or other of those great streams, the bridges of which were in their hands. He still held the central position; but it was robbed of its value if he could not attack. Warfare for him was little else than the art of swift and decisive attack; or, as he tersely phrased it, "The art of war is to march twelve leagues, fight a battle, and march twelve more in pursuit." As this was now impossible against the fronts and flanks of the allies, it only remained to threaten the rear of the army which was most likely to be intimidated by such a manœuvre. And this was clearly the army led by Schwarzenberg. From Blücher and Bülow naught but

[1] Fournier, p. 232, rebuts, and I think successfully, Houssaye's objections (p. 287) to its genuineness. Besides, the letter is on the same moral level with the instructions of January 4th to Caulaincourt, and resembles them in many respects. No forger could have known of those instructions. At Elba, Napoleon admitted that he was wrong in not making peace at this time. "*Mais je me croyais assez fort pour ne pas la faire, et je me suis trompé*" (Lord Holland's "Foreign Rem.," p. 319). The same writer states (p. 296) that he saw the official correspondence about Châtillon: it gave him the highest opinion of Caulaincourt, but N.'s conduct was "full of subterfuge and artifice."

defiance to the death was to be expected, and their rear was supported by the Dutch strongholds.

But the Austrians had shown themselves as soft in their strategy as in their diplomacy. Everyone at the allied headquarters knew that Schwarzenberg was unequal to the load of responsibility thrust on him, that the incursion of a band of Alsatian peasants on his convoys made him nervous, and that he would not move on Paris as long as his "communications were exposed to a movement by Chalons and Vitry."[1] What an effect, then, would be produced on that timid commander by an "Imperial Vendée" in Alsace, Lorraine, and Franche-Comté!

And such a rising might then have become fierce and widespread. The east and centre were the strongholds of French democracy, as they had been the hotbed of feudal and monarchical abuses; and at this very time the Bourbon princes declared themselves at Nancy and Bordeaux. The tactless Comte d'Artois was at Nancy, striving to whip up royalist feeling in Lorraine, and his eldest son, the Duc d'Angoulême, entered Bordeaux with the British red-coats (March 12th).

To explain how this last event was possible we must retrace our steps. After Soult was driven by Wellington from the mountains at the back of the town of Orthez, he drew back his shattered troops over the River Adour, and then turned sharply to the east in order to join hands with Suchet's corps. This move, excellent as it was in a military sense, left Bordeaux open to the British; and Wellington forthwith sent Beresford northwards with 12,000 troops to occupy that great city. He met with a warm greeting from the French royalists, as also did the Duc d'Angoulême, who arrived soon after. The young prince at once proclaimed Louis XVIII. King of France, and allowed the royalist mayor to declare that the allies were advancing to Paris merely in order to destroy Napoleon and replace him by the rightful monarch. Strongly as Wellington's sympathies ran with the aim of this declaration, he emphatically repudiated it. Etiquette compelled him to do so; for the allies were still negotiating with Napoleon; and his own tact warned him that the Bour-

[1] Castlereagh to Clancarty, March 18th.

bons must never come into France under the cloak of the allies.

The allied sovereigns had as yet done nothing to favour their cause; and the wiser heads among the French royalists saw how desirable it was that the initiative should come from France. The bad effects of the Bordeaux manifesto were soon seen in the rallying of National Guards and peasants to the tricolour against the hated *fleur-de-lys;* and Beresford's men could do little more than hold their own.[1] If that was the case in the monarchical south, what might not Napoleon hope to effect in the east, now that the Bourbon "chimæra" threatened to become a fact?

The news as to the state of Paris was less satisfactory. That fickle populace cheered royalist allusions at the theatres, hissed off an "official" play that represented Cossack marauders,[2] and caused such alarm to Savary that he wrote to warn his master of the inability of the police to control the public if the war rolled on towards Paris. Whether Savary's advice was honestly stupid, or whether, as Lavalette hints, Talleyrand's intrigues were undermining his loyalty to Napoleon, it is difficult to say. But certainly the advice gave Napoleon an additional reason for flinging himself on Schwarzenberg's rear and drawing him back into Lorraine. He had reason to hope that Augereau, reinforced by some of Suchet's troops, would march towards Dijon and threaten the Austrians on the south, while he himself pressed on them from the north-east. In that case, would not Austria make peace, and leave Alexander and Blücher at his mercy? And might he not hope to cut off the Comte d'Artois, and possibly also catch Bernadotte, who had been angling unsuccessfully for popular support in the north-east?

But, while basing all his hopes on the devotion of the French peasantry and the pacific leanings of Austria, the French Emperor left out of count the eager hatred of the Czar and the Prussians. "Blücher would be mad if he attempted any serious movement," so Napoleon wrote

[1] Napier, bk. xxiv., ch. iii. Wellington seems to have thought that the allies would probably make peace with Napoleon.

[2] Broglie, "Mems.," bk. iii., ch. i.

to Berthier on the 20th, apparently on the strength of his former suggestion that Joseph should persuade Bernadotte to desert the allies and attack Blücher's rear.[1] At least, it is difficult to find any other reason for Napoleon's strange belief that Blücher would sit still while his allies were being beaten; unless, indeed, we accept Marmont's explanation that Napoleon's brain now rejected all unpleasing news and registered wishes as facts.

Fortune seemed to smile on his enterprise. Though he failed to take Vitry from the allied garrison, yet near St. Dizier he fell on a Prussian convoy, captured 800 men and 400 wagons filled with stores. Everywhere he ordered the tocsin to proclaim a *levée en masse*, and sent messengers to warn his Lorraine garrisons to cut their way to his side. His light troops spread up the valley of the Marne towards Chaumont, capturing stores and couriers; and he seized this opportunity, when he pictured the Austrians as thoroughly demoralized, to send Caulaincourt from Doulevant with offers to renew the negotiations for peace (March 25th).[2] But while Napoleon awaits the result of these

[1] Letter of February 25th to Joseph. Thiébault gives us an odd story that Bernadotte sent an agent, Rainville, to persuade Davoust to join him in attacking the rear of the allies; but that Rainville's nerve so forsook him in Davoust's presence that he turned and bolted for his life!

[2] Caulaincourt to Metternich on March 25th: "Arrived only this [last] night near the Emperor, His Majesty has . . . given me all the powers necessary to sign peace with the Ministers of the allied Courts" (Fain, p. 345; Ernouf, "Vie de Maret," p. 634).

Thiers does not mention these overtures of Napoleon, which are surely most characteristic. His whole eastward move was motived by them. Efforts have been made (*e.g.*, by M. de Bacourt in Talleyrand's "Mems.," pt. vii., app. 4) to prove that on the 25th Napoleon was ready to agree to all the allied terms, and thus concede more than was done by Louis XVIII. But there is no proof that he meant to do anything of the sort. The terms of Caulaincourt's note were perfectly vague. Moreover, even on the 28th, when Napoleon was getting alarmed, he had an interview with a captured Austrian diplomatist, Wessenberg, whom he set free in order that he might confer with the Emperor Francis. He told the envoy that France would yet give him support: he wanted the natural frontiers, but would probably make peace on less favourable terms, as he wished to end the war: "I am ready to renounce all the French colonies if I can thereby keep the mouth of the Scheldt for France. England will not insist on my sacrificing Antwerp if Austria does not support her" (Arneth's "Wessenberg," vol. i., p. 188). This extract shows no great desire to meet the allied terms, but rather to separate Austria from her allies. According to Lady Burghersh ("Journals," p. 216), Napoleon admitted to Wessenberg that his position was desperate. I think this was a pleasing fiction of that envoy. There

proposals, his rear is attacked: he retraces his steps, falls on the assailants, and finds that they belong to Blücher. But how can Prussians be there in force? Is not Blücher resting on the banks of the Aisne? And where is Schwarzenberg? The Emperor pushes a force on to Vitry to solve this riddle, and there the horrible truth unfolds itself little by little that he stands on the brink of ruin.

It is a story instinct with an irony like that of the infatuation of King Œdipus in the pages of Sophocles. Every step that the warrior has taken to snatch at victory increases the completeness of the disaster. The Emperor Francis, scared by the approach of the French horsemen, and not wishing to fall into the hands of his son-in-law, has withdrawn with Metternich to Dijon. Napoleon's letter to him is lost.[1] Metternich, well guarded by Castlereagh, is powerless to meet Caulaincourt's offer, and their flight leaves Schwarzenberg under the influence of the Czar.[2] Moreover, Blücher has not been idle. While Napoleon is hurrying eastwards to Vitry, the Prussian leader drives back Marmont's weak corps, his vanguard crosses the Marne near Epernay on the 23rd, his Cossacks capture a courier bearing a letter written on that day by Napoleon to Marie Louise. It ends thus: "I have decided to march towards the Marne, in order to push the enemy's army further from Paris, and to draw near to my fortresses. I shall be this evening at St. Dizier. Adieu, my friend! Embrace my son." Warned by this letter of Napoleon's plan, Blücher pushes on; his outposts on the morrow join hands with those of Schwarzenberg, and send a thrill of vigour into the larger force.

That leader, held at bay by Macdonald's rearguard, was groping after Napoleon, when the capture of a French despatch, and the news forwarded by Blücher, informed him of the French Emperor's eastward march. A council of war was therefore held at Pougy on the afternoon of

is no proof that Napoleon was wholly cast down till the 29th, when he heard of La Fère-Champenoise (Macdonald's "Souvenirs").

[1] Bignon, vol. xiii., pp. 436, 437.

[2] On hearing of their withdrawal Stein was radiant with joy: "Now," he said, "the Czar will go on to Paris, and all will soon be at an end" (Tourgueneff, quoted by Häusser. vol. iv., p. 553).

the 23rd, when the Czar and the bolder spirits led Schwarzenberg to give up his communications with Switzerland, and stake everything on joining Blücher, and following Napoleon's 40,000 with an array of 180,000 men. But the capture of another French despatch a few hours later altered the course of events once more. This time it was a budget of official news from Paris to Napoleon, describing the exhaustion of the finances, the discontent of the populace, and the sensation caused by Wellington's successes and the capture of Bordeaux. These glad tidings inspired Alexander with a far more incisive plan — to march on Paris. This suggestion had been pressed on him on the 17th by Baron de Vitrolles, a French royalist agent, at the close of a long interview; and now its advantages were obvious. Accordingly, at Sommepuis, on the 24th, he convoked his generals, Barclay, Volkonski, Toll, and Diebitsch, to seek their advice. Barclay was for following Napoleon, but the two last voted for the advance to Paris, Toll maintaining that only 10,000 horsemen need be left behind to screen their movements. The Czar signified his warm approval of this plan; a little later the King of Prussia gave his assent, and Schwarzenberg rather doubtfully deferred to their wishes. Thus the result of Napoleon's incursion on the rear of the allies signally belied his expectations. Instead of compelling the enemy to beat a retreat on the Rhine, it left the road open to his capital.[1]

At dawn on the 25th, then, the allied Grand Army turned to the right-about, while Blücher's men marched joyfully on the parallel road from Chalons. Near La Fère-Champenoise, on that day, a cloud of Russian and Austrian horse harassed Marmont's and Mortier's corps, and took 2,500 prisoners and fifty cannon. Further to

[1] Bernhardi's "Toll," vol. iv., pp. 737 *et seq.*; Houssaye, pp. 354–362; also Nesselrode's communication published in Talleyrand's "Mems." Thielen and Radetzky have claimed that the initiative in this matter was Schwarzenberg's; and Lord Burghersh, in his despatch of March 25th ("Austria," No. 110), agrees with them. Stein supports Toll's claim. I cannot agree with Houssaye (p. 407) that "Napoleon had resigned himself to the sacrifice of Paris." His intercepted letter, and also the official letters, Nos. 21508, 21513, 21516, 21526, 21538, show that he believed the allies would retreat and that his communications with Paris would be safe.

the north, Blücher's Cossacks swooped on a division of 4,500 men, mostly National Guards, that guarded a large convoy. Stoutly the French formed in squares, and beat them off again and again. Thereupon Colonel Hudson Lowe rode away southwards, to beg reinforcements from Wrede's Bavarians.

They, too, failed to break that indomitable infantry. The 180 wagons had to be left behind; but the recruits plodded on, and seemed likely to break through to Marmont, when the Czar came on the scene. At once he ordered up artillery, riddled their ranks with grapeshot, and when their commander, Pacthod, still refused to surrender, threatened to overwhelm their battered squares by the cavalry of his Guard. Pacthod thereupon ordered his square to surrender. Another band also grounded arms; but the men in the last square fought on, reckless of life, and were beaten down by a whirlwind of sabring, stabbing horsemen, whose fury the generous Czar vainly strove to curb. "I blushed for my very nature as a man," wrote Colonel Lowe, "at witnessing this scene of carnage." The day was glorious for France, but it cost her, in all, more than 5,000 killed and wounded, 4,000 prisoners, and 80 cannon, besides the provisions and stores designed for Napoleon's army.[1] Nothing but the wreck of Marmont's and Mortier's corps, about 12,000 men in all, now barred the road to Paris. Meeting with no serious resistance, the allies crossed the Marne at Meaux, and on the 29th reached Bondy, within striking distance of the French capital.

In that city the people were a prey, first to sheer incredulity, then to the wildest dismay. To them history was but a melodrama and war a romance. Never since the time of Jeanne d'Arc had a foreign enemy come within sight of their spires. For ramparts they had octroi walls, and in place of the death-dealing defiance of 1792 they now showed only the spasmodic vehemence or ironical

[1] I take this account largely from Sir Hudson Lowe's unpublished memoirs. Napoleon blamed Marmont for not marching to Rheims as he was ordered to do. At Elba, Napoleon told Colonel Campbell that Marmont's disobedience spoilt the eastern movement, and ruined the campaign. But had Marmont and Mortier joined Napoleon at Vitry, Paris would have been absolutely open to the allies.

resignation of an over-cultivated stock. As M. Charles de Rémusat finely remarks on their varying moods, "The despotism which makes a constant show of prosperity gives men little fortitude to meet adversity." Doubtless the royalists, with Talleyrand as their factotum, worked to paralyze the defence; but they formed a small minority, and the masses would have fought for Napoleon had he been present to direct everything. But he was far away, rushing back through Champagne to retrieve his blunder, and in his place they had Joseph. The ex-King of Spain was not the man for the hour. He was no hero to breathe defiance into a bewildered crowd, nor was he well seconded. Clarke, and Moncey, the commander of the 12,000 National Guards, had not armed one-half of that doubtful militia. Marmont and Mortier were at hand, and, with the garrison and National Guards, mustered some 42,000 men.

But what were these against the trained host of more than 100,000 men now marching against the feeble barriers on the north and east? Moreover, Joseph and the Council of Regency had dispirited the defenders by causing the Empress Regent and the infant King of Rome to leave the capital along with the treasure. In Joseph's defence it should be said that Napoleon had twice warned him to transfer the seat of Government to the south of the Loire if the allies neared Paris, and in no case to allow the Empress and the King of Rome to be captured. "Do not leave the side of my son: I had rather know that he was in the Seine than in the hands of the enemies of France." The Emperor's views as to the effect of the capture of Paris were also well known. In January he remarked to Mollien, the Minister of the Treasure, "My dear fellow, if the enemy reaches the gates of Paris, the Empire is no more." [1]

Oppressed by these gloomy omens, the defenders awaited the onset of the allies at Montreuil, Romainville, Pantin, and on the northern plain (March 30th). At some points

[1] Houssaye, pp. 485 *et seq.*; Napoleon's letters of February 8th and March 16th; Mollien, vol. iv., p. 128. In Napoleon's letter of April 2nd to Joseph ("New Letters") there is not a word of reproach to Joseph for leaving Paris.

French valour held up successfully against the dense masses; but in the afternoon Marmont, seeing his thin lines overlapped, and in imminent danger of being cut off at Belleville, sent out a request for a truce, as Joseph had empowered him to do if affairs proved to be irretrievable. At all points resistance was hopeless; Mortier was hard pressed on the northeast; at the Clichy gate Moncey and his National Guards fought only for honour; and so, after a whole day of sanguinary conflicts, the great city surrendered on honourable terms.

And thus ended the great impulse which had gone forth from Paris since 1789, which had flooded the plains of Germany, the plateaux of Spain, the cities of Italy, and the steppes of Russia, levelling the barriers of castes and creeds, and binding men in a new and solid unity. The reaction against that great centrifugal and international movement had now become centripetal and profoundly national. Thanks to Napoleon's statecraft, the peoples of Europe from the Volga to the Tagus were now embattled in a mighty phalanx, and were about to enter in triumph the city that only twenty-five years before had heralded the dawn of their nascent liberties.

And what of Napoleon, in part the product and in part the cause, of this strange reaction? By a strange Nemesis, his military genius and his overweening contempt of Schwarzenberg drew him aside at the very time when the allies could strike with deadly effect at the heart of his centralized despotism. On the 29th he hears of disaffection at Paris, of the disaster at La Fère-Champenoise, and of the loss of Lyons by Augereau. He at once sees the enormity of his blunder. His weary Guards and he seek to annihilate space. They press on by the unguarded road by way of Troyes and Fontainebleau, thereby cutting off all chance of the Emperor Francis and Metternich sending messages from Dijon to Paris. By incredible exertions the men cover seventeen leagues on the 29th and reach Troyes.

Napoleon, accompanied by Caulaincourt, Drouot, Flahaut, and Lefebvre, rushes on, wearing out horses at every stage: at Fontainebleau on the 30th he hears that his consort has left Paris; at Essonne, that the battle is

raging. Late at night, near Athis, he meets a troop of horse under General Belliard: eagerly he questions this brave officer, and learns that Joseph has left Paris, and that the battle is over. "Forward then to Paris: everywhere where I am not they act stupidly." — "But, sire," says the general, "it is too late: Paris has capitulated."

The indomitable will is not yet broken. He must go on; he will sound the tocsin, rouse the populace, tear up the capitulation, and beat the insolent enemy. The sight of Mortier's troops, a little further on, at last burns the truth into his brain: he sends on Caulaincourt with full powers to treat for peace, and then sits up for the rest of the night, poring over his maps and measuring the devotion of his Guard against the inexorable bounds of time and space. He is within ten miles of Paris, and sees the glare of the enemy's watch-fires all over the northern sky.

On the morrow he hears that the allied sovereigns are about to enter Paris, and Marmont warns him by letter that public opinion has much changed since the withdrawal, first of the Empress, and then of Joseph, Louis, and Jerome. This was true. The people were disgusted by their flight; Blücher now had eighty cannon planted on the heights of Montmartre; and men knew that he would not spare Paris if she hazarded a further effort. And thus, when, on that same morning, the Czar, with the King of Prussia on his right, and Schwarzenberg on his left, rode into Paris at the head of the Russian and Prussian Guards, they met with nothing worse than sullen looks on the part of the masses, while knots of enthusiastic royalists shouted wildly for the Bourbons, and women flung themselves to kiss the boots of the liberating Emperor. The Bourbon party, however, was certainly in the minority; but at places along the route their demonstrations were effective enough to influence an impressionable populace, and to delight the conquerors. — "The white cockade appeared very universally:" — wrote Stewart with suspicious emphasis — "many of the National Guards, whom I saw, wore them."[1]

Fearing that the Elysée Palace had been mined, the Czar installed himself at Talleyrand's mansion, opposite

[1] "Castlereagh Papers," vol. ix., p. 420; Pasquier, vol. iii., ch. xiii.

the Place de la Concorde; and forthwith there took place a most important private council. The two monarchs were present, along with Nesselrode and Napoleon's Corsican enemy, Pozzo di Borgo. Princes Schwarzenberg and Lichtenstein represented Austria; while Talleyrand and Dalberg were there to plead for the House of Bourbon: De Pradt and Baron Louis were afterwards summoned. The Czar opened the deliberations by declaring that there were three courses open, to make peace with Napoleon, to accept Marie Louise as Regent for her son, or to recall the Bourbons.[1] The first he declared to be impossible; the second was beset by the gravest difficulties; and, while stating the objections to the Bourbons, he let it be seen that he now favoured this solution, provided that it really was the will of France. He then called on Talleyrand to speak; and that pleader set forth the case of the Bourbons with his usual skill. The French army, he said, was more devoted to its own glory than to Napoleon. France longed for peace, and she could only find it with due sureties under her old dynasty. If the populace had not as yet declared for the Bourbons, who could wonder at that, when the allies persisted in negotiating with Napoleon? But let them declare that they will no more treat with him, and France would at once show her real desires. For himself, he would answer for the Senate. The Czar was satisfied; Frederick William assented; the Austrian princes said not a word on behalf of the claims of Marie Louise; and the cause of the House of Bourbon easily triumphed.[2]

On the morrow appeared in the "Journal des Débats" a decisive proclamation, signed by Alexander *on behalf of*

[1] We do not know definitely why Alexander dropped Bernadotte so suddenly. On March 17th he had assured the royalist agent, Baron de Vitrolles, that he would not hear of the Bourbons, and that he had first thought of establishing Bernadotte in France, and then Eugène. We do know, however, that Bernadotte had made suspicious overtures to the French General Maison in Belgium ("Castlereagh Papers," vol. ix., pp. 383, 445, 512).

[2] De Pradt, "Restauration de la Royauté, le 31 Mars, 1814"; Pasquier, vol. iii., ch. xiii. Vitrolles ("Mems.," vol. i., pp. 95–101) says that Metternich assured him on March 15th that Austria would not insist on the Regency of Marie Louise, but would listen to the wishes of France.

all the allied Powers; but we must be permitted to doubt whether the Emperor Francis, if present, would have allowed it to appear, especially if his daughter were present in Paris as Regent. The proclamation set forth that the allies would never again treat with "Napoleon Bonaparte" or any member of his family; that they would respect the integrity of France as it existed under its lawful kings, and would recognize and guarantee the constitution which the French nation should adopt.

Accordingly, they invited the Senate at once to appoint a Provisional Government. Talleyrand, as Grand Elector of the Empire, had the power to summon that guardian of the commonwealth, whose vote would clearly be far more expeditious than the *plébiscite* on which Alexander had previously set his heart. Of the 140 Senators only 64 assembled, but over them Talleyrand's influence was supreme. He spake, and they silently registered his suggestions. Thus it was that the august body, taught by ten years of despotism to bend gracefully before every breeze, fulfilled its last function in the Napoleonic *régime* by overthrowing the very constitution which it had been expressly charged to uphold. The date was the 1st of April. Talleyrand, Dalberg, Beurnonville, Jaucourt, and l'Abbé de Montesquiou at once formed a Provisional Government; but the soul of it was Talleyrand. The Czar gave the word, and Talleyrand acted as scene-shifter. The last tableau of this constitutional farce was reached on the following day, when the Senate and the *Corps Législatif* declared that Napoleon had ceased to reign.

Such was the ex-bishop's revenge for insults borne for many a year with courtly tact, but none the less bitterly felt. Napoleon and he had come to regard each other with instinctive antipathy; but while the diplomatist hid his hatred under the cloak of irony, the soldier blurted forth his suspicions. Before leaving Paris, the Emperor had wound up his last Council-meeting by a diatribe against enemies left in the citadel; and his words became all the hotter when he saw that Talleyrand, who was then quietly conversing with Joseph in a corner, took no notice of the outburst. From Champagne he sent off an order to Savary to arrest the ex-Minister, but that function-

ary took upon himself to disregard the order. Probably there was some understanding between them. And thus, after steering past many a rock, the patient schemer at last helped Europe to shipwreck that mighty adventurer when but a league or two from port.

But all was not over yet. Napoleon had fallen back on Fontainebleau, in front of which town he was assembling a force of nearly 60,000 men. Marie Louise, with the Ministers, was at Blois, and desired to make her way to the side of her consort. Had she done so, and had her father been present at Paris, a very interesting and delicate situation would have been the result; and we may fancy that it would have needed all Metternich's *finesse* and Castlereagh's common sense to keep the three monarchs united. But Francis was still at Dijon; and Metternich and Castlereagh did not reach Paris until April 10th; so that everything in these important days was decided by the Czar and Talleyrand, both of them irreconcilable foes of Napoleon. It was in vain that Caulaincourt (April 1st) begged the Czar to grant peace to Napoleon on the basis of the old frontiers. "Peace with him would only be a truce," was the reply.

The victor did not repulse the idea of a Regency so absolutely, and the faithful Minister at once hurried to Fontainebleau to persuade his master to abdicate in favour of his son. Napoleon repulsed the offer with disdain: rather than *that*, he would once more try the hazards of war. He knew that the Old and the Young Guard, still nearly 9,000 strong in all, burned to revenge the insult to French pride; and at the close of a review held on the 3rd in the great court of the palace, they shouted, "To Paris!" and swore to bury themselves under its ruins. It needed not the acclaim of his veterans to prompt him to the like resolve. When, on April 1st, he received a Verbal Note from Alexander, stating that the allies would no longer treat with him, except on his private and family concerns, he exclaimed to Marmont, at the line of the Essonne, that he must fight, for it was a necessity of his position. He also proposed to that Marshal to cross the Seine and attack the allies, forgetting that the Marne, with its bridges held by them, was in the way. Marmont, en-

dowed with a keen and sardonic intelligence, had already seen that his master was more and more the victim of illusions, never crediting the existence of difficulties that he did not actually witness. And when, on the 3rd, or perhaps earlier, offers came from the royalists, the Marshal promised to help them in the way that will shortly appear.

Napoleon's last overtures to the Czar came late on the following day. On that morning he had a long and heated discussion with Berthier, Ney, Oudinot, and Lefebvre. Caulaincourt and Maret were present as peacemakers. The Marshals upbraided Napoleon with the folly of marching on Paris. Angered by their words Napoleon at last said: "The army will obey me." "No," retorted Ney, "it will obey its commanders."

Macdonald, who had just arrived with his weary corps, took up their case with his usual frankness. "Our horses," he said, "can go no further: we have not enough ammunition for one skirmish, and no means of procuring more. If we fail, as we probably shall, the whole of France will be destroyed. We can still impose on the enemy: let us retain our attitude. . . . We have had enough of war without kindling civil war." Finally the Emperor gave way, and drew up a declaration couched in these terms: "The allied Powers having proclaimed that the Emperor Napoleon was the sole obstacle to the re-establishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oaths, declares that he is ready to descend from the throne, to leave France, and even give up his life, for the good of the fatherland, inseparable from the rights of his son, of those of the regency of the Empress and of the maintenance of the laws of the Empire." [1]

A careful reading of this document will show that it was not an act of abdication, but merely a conditional offer to abdicate, which would satisfy those undiplomatic soldiers and gain time. Macdonald also relates that, after drawing it up, the Emperor threw himself on the sofa, struck his thigh, and said: "Nonsense, gentlemen! let us leave all that alone and march to-morrow, we shall beat

[1] For the first draft of this Declaration, see "Corresp.," No. 21555 (note).

them." But they held him to his promise; and Caulaincourt, Ney, and Macdonald straightway proceeding to Paris, beset the Czar with many entreaties and some threats to recognize the Regency.

In their interview, late at night on the 4th, they seemed to make a great impression, especially when they reminded him of his promise not to force any government on France. Next, the Czar called in the members of the Provisional Government, and heard their arguments that a Regency must speedily give way before the impact of the one masterful will. Yet again Alexander listened to the eloquence of Caulaincourt, and finally to the pleadings of the now anxious provisionals. So the night wore on at Talleyrand's mansion, the Czar finally stating that, after hearing the Prussian monarch's advice, he would give his decision. And shortly before dawn came the news that Marmont's corps had marched over to the enemy. "You see," said Alexander to Pozzo di Borgo, "it is Providence that wills it: no more doubt or hesitation now." [1]

On that same night, in fact, Marmont's corps of 12,000 men was brought from Essonne within the lines of the allies, by the Marshal's generals. Marmont himself was then in Paris, having been induced by Ney and Macdonald to come with them, so as to hinder the carrying out of his treasonable design; but his generals, who were in the secret, were alarmed by the frequency of Napoleon's couriers, and carried out the original plan. Thus, at dawn of the 5th, the rank and file found themselves amidst the columns and squadrons of the allies. It was now too late to escape; the men swore at their leaders with helpless fury; and 12,000 men were thus filched from Napoleon's array.[2]

If this conduct be viewed from the personal standpoint, it must be judged a base betrayal of an old friend and benefactor; and it is usually regarded in that light alone. And yet Marmont might plead that his action was neces-

[1] Pasquier, vol. iii., ch. xv.; Macdonald, "Souvenirs."

[2] Houssaye, pp. 593–623; Marmont, vol. vi., pp. 254–272; Macdonald, chs. xxvii.–xxviii. At Elba, Napoleon told Lord Ebrington that Marmont's troops were among the best, and his treachery ruined everything ("Macmillan's Mag.," Dec., 1894).

sary to prevent Napoleon sacrificing his troops, and perhaps also his capital, to a morbid pride and desire for revenge. The Marshal owed something to France. The Chambers had pronounced his master's abdication, and Paris seemed to acquiesce in their decision: Bordeaux and Lyons had now definitely hoisted the white flag: Wellington had triumphed in the south; Schwarzenberg marshalled 140,000 men around the capital; and Marmont knew, perhaps, better than any of the Marshals, the obstinacy of that terrible will which had strewn the roads between Moscow, Paris, and Lisbon with a million of corpses. Was it not time that this should end? And would it end as long as Napoleon saw any chance of snatching a temporary success?

However we may regard Marmont's conduct, there can be no doubt that it helped on Napoleon's fall. The Czar was too subtle a diplomatist to attach much importance to Napoleon's declaration cited above. He must have seen in it a device to gain time. But he himself also wished for a few more hours' respite before flinging away the scabbard; and we may regard his lengthy balancings between the pleas of Caulaincourt and Talleyrand as prompted partly by a wish to sip to the full the sweets of revenge for the occupation of Moscow, but mainly by the resolve to mark time until Marmont's corps had been brought over.

Now that the head was struck off Napoleon's lance, the Czar repulsed all notion of a Regency, but declared that he was ready to grant generous terms to Napoleon if the latter abdicated outright. "Now, when he is in trouble," he said, "I will become once more his friend and will forget the past." In conferences with Napoleon's representatives, Alexander decided that Napoleon must keep the title of Emperor, and receive a suitable pension. The islands of Corfu, Corsica, and Elba were considered for his future abode: the last offered the fewest objections; and though Metternich later on protested against the choice of Elba, the Czar felt his honour pledged to this arrangement.[1]

Napoleon himself now began to yield to the inevitable.

[1] Pasquier, vol. iii., ch. xvi.; "Castlereagh Papers," vol. ix., p. 442. Alison wrongly says that *Napoleon* chose Elba.

On hearing the news of Marmont's defection, he sat for some time as if stupefied, then sadly remarked: "The ungrateful man: well! he will be more unhappy than I." But once more, on the 6th, the fighting instinct comes uppermost. He plans to retire with his faithful troops beyond the Loire, and rally the corps of Augereau, Suchet, and Soult. "Come," he cries to his generals, "let us march to the Alps." Not one of them speaks in reply. "Ah," replies the Emperor to their unspoken thoughts; "you want repose: have it then. Alas! you know not how many disappointments and dangers await you on your beds of down." He then wrote his formal abdication:

"The allied Powers having declared that the Emperor was the sole obstacle to the re-establishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor, faithful to his oaths, declares that he renounces, for himself and his heirs, the thrones of France and Italy, and that there is no sacrifice, not even that of life, which he is not ready to make for the interest of France."

The allies made haste to finish the affair; for even now they feared that the caged lion would burst his bars. Indeed, the trusty secretary Fain asserts that when on Easter Monday, the 11th, Caulaincourt brought back the allies' ratification of this deed, Napoleon's first demand was to retract the abdication. It would be unjust, however, to lay too much stress on this strange conduct; for at that time the Emperor's mind was partly unhinged by maddening tumults.

His anguish increased when he heard the final terms of the allies. They allotted to him the isle of Elba; to his consort and heir, the duchies of Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla, and two millions of francs as an annual subsidy, divided equally between himself and her. They were to keep the title of Emperor and Empress; but their son would bear the name of Duke of Parma, etc. The other Bonapartes received an annual subsidy of 2,500,000 francs, this and the former sum being paid by France. Four hundred soldiers might accompany him to Elba. A "suitable establishment" was to be provided for Eugène outside of France.[1] For some hours Napoleon refused to ratify this compact. All hope of resistance was vain, for

[1] Martens, vol. ix., p. 696.

Oudinot, Victor, Lefebvre, and, finally, Ney and Berthier, had gone over to the royalists: even the soldiery began to waver. But a noble pride held back the mighty conqueror from accepting Elba and signing a money compact. It is not without a struggle that a Cæsar sinks to the level of a Sancho Panza.

He then talked to Caulaincourt with the insight that always illumined his judgments. Marie Louise ought to have Tuscany, he said: Parma would not befit her dignity. Besides, if she had to traverse other States to come to him, would she ever do so? He next talked of his Marshals. Masséna's were the greatest exploits: but Suchet had shown himself the wisest both in war and administration. Soult was able, but too ambitious. Berthier was honest, sensible, the model of a chief of the staff; and "yet he has now caused me much pain." Not a word escaped him about Davoust, still manfully struggling at Hamburg. Not one of his Ministers, he complained, had come from Blois to bid him farewell. He then spoke of his greatest enemy — England. "She has done me much harm, doubtless, but I have left in her flanks a poisoned dart. It is I who have made this debt, that will ever burden, if not crush, future generations." Finally, he came back to the hateful compact which Caulaincourt pressed him in vain to sign. How could he take money from the allies. How could he leave France so small, after receiving her so great!

That same night he sought to end his life. On February the 8th he had warned his brother Joseph that he would do so if Paris were captured. During the retreat from Moscow he had carried about a phial which was said to contain opium, and he now sought to end his miseries. But Caulaincourt, his valet Constant, and the surgeon Ivan were soon at hand with such slight cures as were possible. After violent sickness the Emperor sank into deep prostration; but, when refreshed by tea, and by the cool air of dawning day, he gradually revived. "Fate has decided," he exclaimed: "I must live and await all that Providence has in store for me."[1] He then signed

[1] Thiers and Constant assign this event to the night of 11th–12th. I follow Fain and Macdonald in referring it to the next night.

the treaty with the allies, presented Macdonald with the sword of Murad Bey, and calmly began to prepare for his departure.

Marie Louise did not come to see him. Her decision to do so was overruled by her father, in obedience to whose behests she repaired from Blois to Rambouillet. There, guarded by Cossacks, she saw Francis, Alexander, and Frederick William in turn. What passed between them is not known: but the result was that, on April 23rd, she set out for Vienna, whence she finally repaired to Parma; she manifested no great desire to see her consort at Elba, but soon consoled herself with the Count de Neipperg.

No doubts as to her future conduct, no qualms of conscience as to the destiny of France now ruffled Napoleon's mind. Like a sky cleared by a thunder-storm, once more it shone forth with clear radiance. Those who saw him now were astonished at his calmness, except in some moments when he declaimed at his wife and child being kept from him by Austrian schemes. Then he stormed and wept and declared that he would seek refuge in England, which General Köller, the Austrian commissioner appointed to escort him to Elba, strongly advised him to do. But for the most part he showed remarkable composure. When Bausset sought to soothe him by remarking that France would still form one of the finest of realms, he replied — "*with remarkable serenity* — 'I abdicate and I yield nothing.'"[1] The words hide a world of meaning: they inclose the secret of the Hundred Days.

On the 20th, he bade farewell to his Guard: in thrilling words he told them that his mission thenceforth would be to describe to posterity the wonders they had achieved: he then embraced General Petit, kissed the war-stained banner, and, wafted on his way by the sobs of these unconquered heroes, set forth for the Mediterranean. In the central districts, and as far as Lyons, he was often greeted by the well-known shouts, but, further south, the temper of the people changed.

At Orange they cursed him to his face, and hurled stones at the windows of the carriage; Napoleon, protected by Bertrand, sat huddled up in the corner, "ap-

[1] Bausset, "Cour de Napoléon."

parently very much frightened." After forcing a way through the rabble, the Emperor, when at a safe distance, donned a plain greatcoat, a Russian cloak, and a plain round hat with a white cockade: in this or similar disguises he sought to escape notice at every village or town, evincing, says the British Commissioner, Colonel Campbell, "much anxiety to save his life."

By a détour he skirted the town of Avignon, where the mob thirsted for his blood; and by another device he disappointed the people of Orgon, who had prepared an effigy of him in uniform, smeared with blood, and placarded with the words: "Voilà donc l'odieux tyran! Tôt ou tard le crime est puni."[1] In this humiliating way he hurried on towards the coast, where a British frigate, the "Undaunted," was waiting for him. There some suspicious delays ensued, which aroused the fears of the allied commissioners, especially as bands of French soldiers began to draw near after the break-up of Eugène's army.[2]

At last, on the 28th, accompanied by Counts Bertrand and Drouot, he set sail from Fréjus. It was less than fifteen years since he had landed there crowned with the halo of his oriental adventures.

[1] Sir Neil Campbell's "Journal," p. 192.
[2] Ussher, "Napoleon's Last Voyages," p. 29.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ELBA AND PARIS

If it be an advantage to pause in the midst of the rush of life and take one's bearings afresh, then Napoleon was fortunate in being drifted to the quiet eddy of Elba. He there had leisure to review his career, to note where he had served his generation and succeeded, where also he had dashed himself fruitlessly against the fundamental instincts of mankind. Undoubtedly he did essay this mental stock-taking. He remarked to the conscientious Drouot that he was wrong in not making peace at the Congress of Prague; that trust in his own genius and in his soldiery led him astray; "but those who blame me have never drunk of Fortune's intoxicating cup." When a turn of her wheel brought him uppermost again, he confessed that at Elba he had heard, as in a tomb, the verdict of posterity; and there are signs that his maturer convictions thenceforth strove to curb the old domineering instincts that had wrecked his life.

Introspection, however, was alien to his being; he was made for the camp rather than the study; his critical powers, if turned in for a time on himself, quickly swung back to work upon men and affairs; and they found the needed exercise in organizing his Liliputian Empire and surveying the course of European politics. In the first weeks he was up at dawn, walking or riding about Porto Ferrajo and its environs, planning better defences, or tracing out new roads and avenues of mulberry trees. "I have never seen a man," wrote Campbell, "with so much activity and restless perseverance: he appears to take pleasure in perpetual movement, and in seeing those who accompany him sink under fatigue." About seven hundred of his Guards were brought over on British transports; and these, along with Corsicans and Tuscans,

guarded him against royalist plotters, real or supposed. In a short time he purchased a few small vessels, and annexed the islet of Pianosa. These affairs and the formation of an Imperial Court for the delectation of his mother and his sister Pauline, who now joined him, served to drive away ennui; but he bitterly resented the Emperor Francis's refusal to let his wife and son come to him. Whether Marie Louise would have come is more than doubtful, for her relations to Count Neipperg were already notorious; but the detention of his son was a heartless action that aroused general sympathy for the lonely man. The Countess Walewska paid him a visit for some days, bringing the son whom she had borne him.[1]

Meanwhile Europe was settling down uneasily on its new political foundations. Considering that France had been at the mercy of the allies, she had few just grounds of complaint against them. The Treaties of Paris (May 30th, 1814) left her with rather wider bounds than those of 1791; and she kept the art treasures reft by Napoleon. Perfidious Albion yielded up all her French colonial conquests, except Mauritius, Tobago, and St. Lucia. Britons grumbled at the paltry gains brought by a war that had cost more than £600,000,000: but Castlereagh justified the policy of conciliation. "It is better," said he, "for France to be commercial and pacific than a warlike and conquering State." We insisted on her ceding Belgium to the House of Orange, while we retained the Dutch colonies conquered by us, the Cape, Demerara, and Curaçoa — paying £6,000,000 for them.

The loss of the Netherlands, the Rhineland, and Italy galled French pride. Loud were the murmurs of the throngs of soldiers that came from the fortresses of Germany, or the prisons of Spain, Russia, and England — 70,000 crossed over from our shores alone — at the harshness of the allies and the pusillanimity of the Bourbons.

[1] A quondam Jacobin, Pons (de l'Hérault), Commissioner of Mines at Elba, has left "Souvenirs de l'Ile d'Elbe," which are of colossal credulity. In ch. xi. he gives tales of plots to murder Napoleon — some of them very silly. In pt. ii., ch. i., he styles him "essentiellement réligieux," and a most tender-hearted man, who was compelled by prudence to hide his sensibility! Yet Campbell's official reports show that Pons, *at that time*, was far from admiring Napoleon.

The return from war to peace is always hard; and now these gaunt warriors came back to a little France that perforce discharged them or placed them on half-pay. Perhaps they might have been won over by a tactful Court: but the Bourbons, especially that typical *émigré*, the Comte d'Artois, were nothing if not tactless, witness their shelving of the Old Guard and formation of the Maison du Roi, a privileged and highly paid corps of 6,000 nobles and royalist gentlemen. The peasants, too, were uneasy, especially those who held the lands of nobles confiscated in the Revolution. To indemnify the former owners was impossible in face of the torrent of exorbitant claims that flowed in. And the year 1814, which began as a soul-stirring epic, ended with sordid squabbles worthy of a third-rate farce.

Moreover, at this very time, the former allies seemed on the brink of war. The limits of our space admit only of the briefest glance at the disputes of the Powers at the Congress of Vienna. The storm centre of Europe was the figure of the Czar. To our ambassador at Vienna, Sir Charles Stewart, he declared his resolve to keep Western Poland and never to give up 7,000,000 of his "Polish subjects."[1] Strange to say, he ultimately gained the assent of Prussia to this objectionable scheme, provided that she acquired the whole of Saxony, while Frederick Augustus was to be transplanted to the Rhineland with Bonn as capital. To these proposals Austria, England, and France offered stern opposition, and framed a secret compact (January 3rd, 1815) to resist them if need be with armies amounting to 450,000 men. But, though swords were rattled in their scabbards, they were not drawn. When news reached Vienna of the activity of Bonapartists in France and of Murat in Italy, the Powers agreed (February 8th) to the Saxon-Polish compromise which took shape in the map of Eastern Europe. The territorial arrangements in the west were evidently inspired by the wish to build up bulwarks

[1] "F. O.," Austria, No. 117. Talleyrand, in his letters to Louis XVIII., claims to have broken up the compact of the Powers. But it is clear that fear of Russia was more potent than Talleyrand's *finesse*. Before the Congress began Castlereagh and Wellington advised friendship with France so as to check "undue pretensions" elsewhere.

PORTO FERRAJO, ELBA, 1814.

From a contemporary aquatint.

against France. Belgium was tacked on to Holland ; Germany was huddled into a Confederation, in which the princes had complete sovereign powers ; and the Kingdom of Sardinia grew to more than its former bulk by recovering Savoy and Nice and gaining Genoa.

This piling up of artificial barriers against some future Napoleon was to serve the designs of the illustrious exile himself. The instinct of nationality, which his blows had aroused to full vigour, was now outraged by the sovereigns whom it carried along to victory. Belgians strongly objected to Dutch rule, and German "unitarians," as Metternich dubbed them, spurned a form of union which subjected the Fatherland to Austria and her henchmen. Hardest of all was the fate of Italy. After learning the secret of her essential unity under Napoleon, she was now parcelled out among her former rulers ; and thrills of rage shot through the peninsula when the Hapsburgs settled down at Venice and Milan, while their scions took up the reins at Modena, Parma, and Florence.

It was on this popular indignation that Murat now built his hopes. After throwing over Napoleon, he had looked to find favour with the allies ; but his movements in 1814 had been so suspicious that the fate of his kingdom remained hanging in the balance. The Bourbons of Paris and Madrid strove hard to effect his overthrow ; but Austria and England, having tied their hands early in 1814 by treaties with him, could only wait and watch in the hope that the impetuous soldier would take a false step. He did so in February, 1815, when he levied forces, summoned Louis XVIII. to declare whether he was at war with him, and prepared to march into Northern Italy.

The disturbed state of the peninsula caused the Powers much uneasiness as to the presence of Napoleon at Elba. Louis XVIII. in his despatches, and Talleyrand in private conversations, two or three times urged his removal to the Azores ; but, with the exception of Castlereagh, who gave a doubtful assent, the plenipotentiaries scouted the thought of it. Metternich entirely opposed it, and the Czar would certainly have objected to the reversal of his Elba plan, had Talleyrand made a formal proposal to that effect. But he did not do so. The official records of the Congress

contain not a word on the subject. Equally unfounded were the newspaper rumours that the Congress was considering the advisability of removing Napoleon to St. Helena. On this topic the official records are also silent; and we have the explicit denial of the Duke of Wellington (who reached Vienna on the 1st of February to relieve Castlereagh) that "the Congress ever had any intention of removing Bonaparte from Elba to St. Helena."[1]

Napoleon's position was certainly one of unstable equilibrium, that tended towards some daring enterprise, or inglorious bankruptcy. The maintenance of his troops cost him more than 1,000,000 francs a year, while his revenue was less than half of that sum. He ought to have received 2,000,000 francs a year from Louis XVIII.; but that monarch, while confiscating the property of the Bonapartes in France, paid not a centime of the sums which the allies had pledged him to pay to the fallen House. Both the Czar and our envoy, Castlereagh, warmly reproached Talleyrand with his master's shabby conduct; to which the plenipotentiary replied that it was dangerous to furnish Napoleon with money as long as Italy was in so disturbed a state. Castlereagh, on his return to England by way of Paris, again pressed the matter on Louis XVIII., who promised to take the matter in hand. But he was soon quit of it: for, as he wrote to Talleyrand on March 7th, Bonaparte's landing in France *spared him the trouble*.[2]

To assert, however, that Napoleon's escape from Elba was prompted by a desire to avoid bankruptcy, is to credit him with respectable *bourgeois* scruples by which he was never troubled. Though "Madame Mère" and Pauline

[1] Stanhope's "Conversations," p. 26. In our archives ("Russia," No. 95) is a suspicious letter of Pozzo di Borgo, dated Paris, July $\frac{19}{22}$, 1814, to Castlereagh (it is not in his Letters) containing this sentence: "*L'existence de Napoléon*, comme il était aisé à prévoir, est un inconvénient qui se rencontre partout." For Fouché's letter to Napoleon, begging him voluntarily to retire to the New World, see Talleyrand's "Mems.," pt. vii., app. iv. Lafayette ("Mems.," vol. v., p. 345) asserts that French royalists were plotting his assassination. Brulart, Governor of Corsica, was suspected by Napoleon, but, it seems, wrongly (Houssaye's "1815," p. 172).

[2] Pallain, "Correspondance de Louis XVIII. avec Talleyrand," pp. 307, 316.

complained bitterly to Campbell of the lack of funds at Elba, the Emperor himself was far from depressed. "His spirits seem of late," wrote Campbell on December 28th, "rather to rise, and not to yield in the smallest degree to the pressure of pecuniary difficulties." Both Campbell and Lord John Russell, who then paid the Emperor a flying visit, thought that he was planning some great move, and warned our Ministers.[1] But they shared the view of other wiseacres, that Italy would be his goal, and that too, when Campbell's despatches teemed with remarks made to him by Napoleon as to the certainty of an outbreak in France. Here are two of them :

"He said that there would be a violent outbreak, similar to the Revolution, in consequence of their present humiliation: every man in France considers the Rhine to be the natural frontier of France, and nothing can alter this opinion. If the spirit of the nation is roused into action nothing can oppose it. It is like a torrent. . . . The present Government of France is too feeble: the Bourbons should make war as soon as possible so as to establish themselves upon the throne. It would not be difficult to recover Belgium. It is only for the British troops there that the French army has the smallest awe" (*sic*).

His final resolve to put everything to the hazard was formed about February 13th, when, shortly after receiving tidings as to the unrest in Italy, the discords of the Powers, and the resolve of the allied sovereigns to leave Vienna on the 20th, he heard news of the highest importance from France. On that day one of his former officials, Fleury de Chaboulon, landed in Elba, and informed him of the hatching of a plot by military malcontents, under the lead of Fouché, for the overthrow of Louis XVIII.[2] Napoleon at once despatched his informant to Naples, and ordered his brig, "L'Inconstant," to be painted like an English vessel. Most fortunately for

[1] "Recollections," p. 16 ; "F. O.," France, No. 114. The facts given above seem to me to refute the statements often made that the allies violated the Elba arrangement and so justified his escape. The facts prove that the allies sought to compel Louis XVIII. to pay Napoleon the stipulated sum, and that the Emperor welcomed the non-payment. His words to Lord Ebrington on December 6th breathe the conviction that France would soon rise.

[2] Fleury de Chaboulon's "Mems.," vol. i., pp. 105–140 ; Lafayette, vol. v., p. 355.

him, Campbell on the 16th set sail for Tuscany — "for his health and on private affairs" — on the small war-vessel, "Partridge," to which the British Government had intrusted the supervision of Napoleon. Captain Adye, of that vessel, promised, after taking Campbell to Leghorn, to return and cruise off Elba. He called at Porto Ferrajo on the 24th, and to Bertrand's question, when he was to bring Campbell back, returned the undiplomatic answer that it was fixed for the 26th. The news seems to have decided Napoleon to escape on that day, when the "Partridge" would be absent at Leghorn. Meanwhile Campbell, alarmed by the news of the preparations at Elba, was sending off a request to Genoa that another British warship should be sent to frustrate the designs of the "restless villain."

But it was now too late. On that Sunday night at 9 P.M., the Emperor, with 1,050 officers and men, embarked at Porto Ferrajo on the "Inconstant" and six smaller craft. Favoured by the light airs that detained the British vessel, his flotilla glided away northwards; and not before the 28th did Adye and Campbell find that the imperial eagle had flown. Meanwhile Napoleon had eluded the French guard-ship, "Fleur-de-Lys," and ordered his vessels to scatter. On doubling the north of Corsica, he fell in with another French cruiser, the "Zephyr," which hailed his brig and inquired how the great man was. "Marvellously well," came the reply, suggested by Napoleon himself to his captain. The royalist cruiser passed on contented. And thus, thanks to the imbecility of the old Governments and of their servants, Napoleon was able to land his little force safely in the Golfe de Jouan on the afternoon of March 1st.[1] Is it surprising that foreigners, who had not yet fathomed the eccentricities of British officialdom, should have believed that we connived at Napoleon's escape? It needed the blood shed at Waterloo to wipe out the misconception.

"I shall reach Paris without firing a shot." Such was the prophecy of Napoleon to his rather questioning followers as they neared the coast of Provence. It seemed

[1] Campbell's "Journal"; Peyrusse, "Mémorial," p. 275.

THE PORT OF ANTIBES.

Engraved in 1762 from a picture by Joseph Vernet in the collection of the King of France.

the wildest of dreams. Could the man, who had been wellnigh murdered by the rabble of Avignon and Orgon, hope to march in peace through that royalist province? And, if he ever reached the central districts where men loved him better, would the soldiery dare to disobey the commands of Soult, the new Minister of War, of Ney, Berthier, Macdonald, St. Cyr, Suchet, Augereau, and of many more who were now honestly serving the Bourbons? The King and his brothers had no fears. They laughed at the folly of this rash intruder.

At first their confidence seemed justified. Napoleon's overtures to the officer and garrison of Antibes were repulsed, and the small detachment which he sent there was captured. Undaunted by this check, he decided to hurry on by way of Grasse towards Grenoble, thus forestalling the news of his first failure, and avoiding the royalist districts of the lower Rhone.

Napoleon was visibly perturbed as he drew near to Grenoble. There the officer in command, General Marchand, had threatened to exterminate this "band of brigands"; and his soldiers as yet showed no signs of defection. But, by some bad management, only one battalion held the defile of Laffray on the south. As the bear-skins of the Guard came in sight, the royalist ranks swerved and drew back. Then the Emperor came forward, and ordered his men to lower their arms. "There he is: fire on him," cried a royalist officer. Not a shot rang out. — "Soldiers," said the well-known voice, "if there is one among you who wishes to kill his Emperor, he can do so. Here I am." At once a great shout of "Vive l'Empereur" burst forth: and the battalion broke into an enthusiastic rush towards the idol of the soldiery.

That scene decided the whole course of events. A little later, a young noble, Labédoyère, leads over his regiment; at Grenoble the garrison stands looking on and cheering while the Bonapartists batter in the gates; and the hero is borne in amidst a whirlwind of cheers. At Lyons, the Comte d'Artois and Macdonald seek safety in flight; and soldiers and workmen welcome their chief with wild acclaim; but amidst the wonted cries are heard

threats of "The Bourbons to the guillotine," "Down with the priests!"

The shouts were ominous: they showed that the Jacobins meant to use Napoleon merely as a tool for the overthrow of the Bourbons. The "have-nots" cheered him, but the "haves" shivered at his coming, for every thinking man knew that it implied war with Europe.[1] Napoleon saw the danger of relying merely on malcontents and sought to arouse a truly national feeling. He therefore on March 13th issued a series of popular decrees that declared the rule of the Bourbons at an end, dissolved the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, and summoned the "electoral colleges" of the Empire to a great assembly, or *Champ de Mai*, at Paris. He further proscribed the white flag, ordered the wearing of the tricolour cockade, disbanded the hated "Maison du Roi," abolished feudal titles, and sequestered the domains of the Bourbon princes. In brief, he acted as the Bonaparte of 1799. He then set forth for Paris, at the head of 14,000 men.

Ney was at the same time marching with 6,000 men from Besançon "to bring him back in an iron cage." The Nemesis that haunts the steps of braggarts was already dogging him. His soldiers kept a sullen silence. At Bourg the leading regiment deserted; and while beset by difficulties, the Marshal received from Napoleon the assurance that he would be received as he was on the day after the Moskwa (Borodino). This was enough. He drew his troops around him, and, to their lively joy, declared for the Emperor (March 14th). Napoleon was as good as his word. Never prone to petty malice, he now received with equal graciousness those officers who flung themselves at his feet, and those who staunchly served the King to the very last. Before this sunny magnanimity the last hopes of the Bourbons melted away. Greeted on all sides by soldiers and peasants, the enchanter advances on Paris, whence the King and Court beat a hasty retreat towards Lille.

Crowds of peasants line and almost block the road from Fontainebleau to catch a glimpse of the gray coat; and, to expedite matters, he drives on in a cabriolet with his

[1] Houssaye's "1815," p. 277.

faithful Caulaincourt. Escorted by a cavalcade of officers he enters Paris after nightfall; but there the tone of the public is cool and questioning, until the front of the Tuileries facing the river is reached.[1] Then a mighty shout arises from the throng of jubilant half-pay officers as the well-known figure alights: he passes in, and is half carried up the grand staircase, "his eyes half closed," says Lavalette, "his hands extended before him like a blind man, and expressing his joy only by a smile." Ladies are there also, who have spent the weary hours of waiting in stripping off *fleurs-de-lys*, and gleefully exposing the N's and golden bees concealed by cheap Bourbon upholstery. Anon they fly back to this task; the palace wears its wonted look; and the brief spell of Bourbon rule seems gone for ever.

To his contemporaries this triumph of Napoleon appeared a miracle before which the voice of criticism must be dumb. And yet, if we remember the hollowness of the Bourbon restoration, the tactlessness of the princes and the greed of their partisans, it seems strange that the house of cards reared by the Czar and Talleyrand remained standing even for eleven months. Napoleon correctly described the condition of France when he said to his comrades on the "Inconstant": "There is no historic example that induces me to venture on this bold enterprise: but I have taken into account the surprise that will seize on men, the state of public feeling, the resentment against the allies, the love of my soldiers, in fine, all the Napoleonic elements that still germinate in our beautiful France."[2]

Still less was he deceived by the seemingly overwhelming impulse in his favour. He looked beyond the hysteria of welcome to the cold and critical fit which follows; and he saw danger ahead. When Mollien complimented him on his return, he replied, alluding to the general indifference at the departure of the Bourbons: "My dear fellow! People have let me come, just as they let the others go." The remark reveals keen insight into the workings of

[1] Guizot, "Mems.," ch. iii.; De Broglie, "Mems.," bk. ii., ch. ii.; Fleury, vol. i., p. 259.

[2] Peyrusse, "Mémorial," p. 277.

French public opinion. The whole course of the Revolution had shown how easy it was to destroy a government, how difficult to rebuild. In truth, the events of March, 1815, may be called the epilogue of the revolutionary drama. The royal House had offended the two most powerful of French interests, the military and the agrarian, so that soldiers and peasants clutched eagerly at Napoleon as a mighty lever for its overthrow.

The Emperor wisely formed his Ministry before the first enthusiasm cooled down. Maret again became Secretary of State; Decrès took the Navy; Gaudin the finances; Mollien was coaxed back to the Treasury, and Davoust reluctantly accepted the Ministry of War. Savary declined to be burdened with the Police, and Napoleon did not press him: for that clever intriguer, Fouché, was pointed out as the only man who could rally the Jacobins around the imperial throne: to him, then, Napoleon assigned this important post, though fully aware that in his hands it was a two-edged tool. Carnot was finally persuaded to become Minister for Home Affairs.

Napoleon's fate, however, was to be decided, not at Paris, but by the statesmen assembled at Vienna. There time was hanging somewhat heavily, and the news of Napoleon's escape was welcomed at first as a grateful diversion. Talleyrand asserted that Napoleon would aim at Italy, but Metternich at once remarked: "He will make straight for Paris." When this prophecy proved to be alarmingly true, a drastic method was adopted to save the Bourbons. The plenipotentiaries drew up a declaration that Bonaparte, having broken the compact which established him at Elba — the only legal title attaching to his existence — had placed himself outside the bounds of civil and social relations, and, as an enemy and disturber of the peace of the world, was consigned to "public prosecution" (March 13th).[1] The rigour of this decree has been generally condemned. But, after

[1] As Wellington pointed out ("Despatches," May 5th, 1815), the phrase "il s'est livré à la vindicte publique" denotes public justice *not* public vengeance. At St. Helena, Napoleon told Gourgaud that he came back *too soon* from Elba, *believing that the Congress had dissolved!* (Gourgaud's "Journals," vol. ii., p. 323.)

all, it did not exceed in harshness Napoleon's own act of proscription against Stein; it was a desperate attempt to stop the flight of the imperial eagle to Paris and to save France from war with Europe.

Public considerations were doubtless commingled with the promptings of personal hatred. We are assured that Talleyrand was the author of this declaration, which had the complete approval of the Czar. But Napoleon had one enemy more powerful than Alexander, more insidious than Talleyrand, and that was — his own past. Everywhere the spectre of war rose up before the imagination of men. The merchant pictured his ships swept off by privateers: the peasant saw his homestead desolate: the housewife dreamt of her larder emptied by taxes, and sons carried off for the war. At Berlin, wrote Jackson, all was agitation, and everybody said that *the work of last year would have to be done over again.*

In England the current of public feeling was somewhat weakened by the drifts and eddies of party politics. Many of the Whigs made a popular hero of Napoleon, some from a desire to overthrow the Liverpool Ministry that proscribed him; others because they believed, or tried to believe, that the return of Napoleon concerned only France, and that he would leave Europe alone if Europe left him alone. Others there were again, as Hazlitt, who could not ignore the patent fact that Napoleon was an international personage and had violated a European compact, yet nevertheless longed for his triumph over the bad old governments and did not trouble much as to what would come next. But, on the whole, the judgment of well-informed people may be summed up in the conclusion of that keen lawyer, Crabbe Robinson: "The question is, peace with Bonaparte now, or war with him in Germany two years hence."[1] The matter came to a test on April 28th, when Whitbread's motion against war was rejected by 273 to 72.[2]

If that was the general opinion in days when Ministers and diplomatists alone knew the secrets of the game, it was certain that the initiated, who remembered his wrong-

[1] "Diary," April 15th and 18th, 1815.
[2] "Parl. Debates;" Romilly's "Diary," vol. ii., p. 360.

headed refusals to make peace even in the depressing days of 1814, would strive to crush him before he could gather all his strength. In vain did he protest that he had learnt by sad experience and was a changed man. They interpreted his pacific speeches by their experience of his actions ; and thus his overweening conduct in the past blotted out all hope of his crowning a romantic career by a peaceful and benignant close. The declaration of outlawry was followed, on March 25th, by the conclusion of treaties between the Powers, which virtually renewed those framed at Chaumont. In quick succession the smaller States gave in their adhesion ; and thus the coalition which tact and diplomacy had dissolved was revivified by the fears which the mighty warrior aroused. Napoleon made several efforts to sow distrust among the Powers ; and chance placed in his hands a veritable apple of discord.

The Bourbons in their hasty flight from Paris had left behind several State papers, among them being the recent secret compact against Russia and Prussia. Napoleon promptly sent this document to the Czar at Vienna ; but his hopes of sundering the allies were soon blighted. Though Alexander and Metternich had for months refused to exchange a word or a look, yet the news of Napoleon's adventure brought about a speedy reconciliation ; and when the compromising paper from Paris was placed in the Czar's hands, he took the noble revenge of sending for Metternich, casting it into the fire, and adjuring the Minister to forget recent disputes in the presence of their common enemy. Napoleon strove to detach Austria from the Coalition, as did also Fouché on his own account ; but the overtures led to no noteworthy result, except that Napoleon, on finding out Fouché's intrigue, threatened to have him shot — a threat which that necessary tool treated with quiet derision.

A few acts of war occurred at once ; but Austria and Russia pressed for delay, the latter with the view of overthrowing Murat. That potentate now drew the sword on behalf of Napoleon, and summoned the Italians to struggle for their independence. But he was quickly overpowered at Tolentino (May 3rd), and fled from his kingdom, dis-

guised as a sailor, to Toulon. There he offered his sword to Napoleon; but the Emperor refused his offer and blamed him severely, alleging that he had compromised the fortunes of France by rendering peace impossible. The charge must be pronounced not proven. The allies had taken their resolve to destroy Napoleon on March 13th, and Murat's adventure merely postponed the final struggle for a month or so.

Napoleon used this time of respite to form his army and stamp out opposition in France. The French royalist bands gave him little trouble. In the south-west the *fleur-de-lys* was speedily beaten down; but in La Vendée royalism had its roots deep-seated. Headed by the two Larochejacqueleins, the peasants made a brave fight; and 20,000 regulars failed to break them up until the month of June was wearing on. What might not those 20,000 men, detained in La Vendée, have effected on the crest of Waterloo?

Napoleon's preoccupation, however, was the conduct of the Jacobins in France, who had been quickened to immense energy by the absurdities of the royalist reaction and felt that they had the new ruler in their power. A game of skill ensued, which took up the greater part of the "Hundred Days" of Napoleon's second reign. His conduct proved that he was not sure of success. He felt out of touch with this new liberty-loving France, so different from the passively devoted people whom he had left in 1814; he bridled his impetuous nature, reasoning with men, inviting criticism, and suggesting doubts as to his own proposals, in a way that contrasted curiously with the old sledge-hammer methods.

"He seemed," writes Mollien, "habitually calm, pensive, and preserved without affectation a serious dignity, with little of that old audacity and self-confidence which had never met with insuperable obstacles. . . . As his thoughts were cramped in a narrow space girt with precipices instead of soaring freely over a vast horizon of power, they became laborious and painful. . . . A kind of lassitude, that he had never known before, took hold of him after some hours of work."

This Pegasus in harness chafed at the unwonted yoke; and at times the old instincts showed themselves. On

one occasion, when the subject turned on the new passion for liberty, he said to Lavalette with a question in his voice: "All this will last two or three years?" "Your Majesty," replied the Minister, "must not believe that. It will last for ever."

The first grave difficulty was to frame a constitution, especially as his Lyons decrees led men to believe that it would emanate from the people, and be sanctioned by them in a great *Champ de Mai*. Perhaps this was impossible. A great part of France was a prey to civil strifes; and it was a skilful device to intrust the drafting of a constitution to Benjamin Constant.

This brilliant writer and talker had now run through the whole gamut of political professions. A pronounced Jacobin and free-thinker during the Consulate, he subsequently retired to Germany, where he unlearnt his politics, his religion, and his philosophy. The sight of Napoleon's devastations made him a supporter of the throne and altar, compelled him to recast his treatises, and drove him to consort with the quaint circle of pietists who prayed and grovelled with Madame de Krudener. Returning to France at the Restoration, he wielded his facile pen in the cause of the monarchy, and fluttered after the fading charms of Madame Récamier, confiding to his friend, De Broglie, that he knew not whether to trust most to divine or satanic agencies for success in this lawless chase. In March, 1815, he thundered in the Press against the brigand of Elba — until the latter won him over in the space of a brief interview, and persuaded him to draft, with a few colleagues, the final constitution of the age.

Not that Constant had a free hand: he worked under imperial inspiration. The present effort was named the Additional Act — additional, that is, to the Constitutions of the Empire (April 22nd, 1815). It established a Chamber of Peers nominated by Napoleon, with hereditary rights, and a Chamber of Representatives elected on the plan devised in August, 1802. The Emperor was to nominate all the judges, including the *juges de paix;* the jury system was maintained, and liberty of the Press

was granted. The Chambers also gained somewhat wider control over the Ministers.[1]

This Act called forth a hail of criticisms. When the Council of State pointed out that there was no guarantee against confiscations, Napoleon's eyes flashed fire, and he burst forth :

"You are pushing me in a way that is not mine. You are weakening and chaining me. France looks for me and does not find me. Public opinion was excellent : now it is execrable. France is asking what has come to the Emperor's arm, this arm which she needs to master Europe. Why speak to me of goodness, abstract justice, and of natural laws? The first law is necessity : the first justice is the public safety."

The councillors quailed under this tirade and conceded the point — though we may here remark that Napoleon showed a wise clemency towards his foes, and confiscated the estates of only thirteen of them.

Public opinion became more and more "execrable." Some historians have asserted that the decline of Napoleon's popularity was due, not to the Additional Act, but to the menaces of war from a united Europe : this may be doubted. Miot de Melito, who was working for the Emperor in the West, states that "never had a political error more immediate effects" than that Act ; and Lavalette, always a devoted adherent, asserts that Frenchmen thenceforth "saw only a despot in the Emperor and forgot about the enemy."

As a display of military enthusiasm, the *Champ de Mai*, of June 1st, recalled the palmy days gone by. Veterans and conscripts hailed their chief with jubilant acclaim, as with a few burning words he handed them their eagles. But the people on the outskirts cheered only when the troops cheered. Why should they, or the "electors" of France, cheer? They had hoped to give her a constitution ; and they were now merely witnesses to Napoleon's

[1] Napoleon told Cockburn during his last voyage that he bestowed this constitution, not because it was a wise measure, but as a needful concession to popular feeling. The continental peoples were not fit for representative government as England was ("Last Voyages of Nap.," pp. 115, 137). So, too, he said to Gourgaud he was wrong in summoning the Chambers at all "*especially as I meant to dismiss them as soon as I was a conqueror*" (Gourgaud, "Journal," vol. i., p. 93).

oath that he would obey the constitution of his own making. As a civic festival, it was a mockery in the eyes of men who remembered the "Feast of Pikes" and were not to be dazzled by the waving of banners and the gorgeous costumes of Napoleon and his brothers. The opening of the Chambers six days later gave an outlet to the general discontent. Lucien Bonaparte, the official nominee for the Presidency of the Lower House, was rejected in favour of that honest democrat, Lanjuinais. Everything portended a constitutional crisis, when the summons to arms rang forth; and the chief, warning the deputies not to imitate the Greeks of the late Empire by discussing abstract propositions while the battering-ram thundered at their gates, cut short these barren debates by that appeal to the sword which had rarely belied his hopes.

CHAPTER XXXIX

LIGNY AND QUATRE BRAS

A LESS determined optimist than Napoleon might well have hoped for success over the forces of the new coalition. True, they seemed overwhelmingly great. But many a coalition had crumbled away under the alchemy of his statecraft; and the jealousies that had raged at the Congress of Vienna inspired the hope that Austria, and perhaps England, might speedily be detached from their present allies. Strange as it seems to us, the French people opined that Napoleon's escape from Elba was due to the connivance of the British Government; and Captain Mercer states that, even at Waterloo, many of the French clung to the belief that the British resistance would be a matter of form. Napoleon cherished no such illusion: but he certainly hoped to surprise the British and Prussian forces in Belgium, and to sever at one blow an alliance which he judged to be ill cemented. Thereafter he would separate Austria from Russia, a task that was certainly possible if victory crowned the French eagles.[1]

His military position was far stronger than it had been since the Moscow campaign. The loss of Germany and Spain had really added to his power. No longer were his veterans shut up in the fortresses of Europe from Danzig to Antwerp, from Hamburg to Ragusa; and the Peninsular War no longer engulfed great armies of his choicest troops. In the eyes of Frenchmen he was not beaten in 1814; he was only tripped up by a traitor when on the point of crushing his foes. And, now that peace had brought back garrisons and prisoners of war, as many as 180,000 well-trained troops were ranged under the im-

[1] Mercer's "Waterloo Campaign," vol. i., p. 352. For Fleury de Chaboulon's mission to sound Austria, see his "Mems.," vol. ii., and Madelin's "Fouché," ch. xxv.

perial eagles. He hoped by the end of June to have half a million of devoted soldiers ready for the field.

The difficulties that beset him were enough to daunt any mind but his. Some of the most experienced Marshals were no longer at his side. St. Cyr, Macdonald, Oudinot, Victor, Marmont, and Augereau remained true to Louis XVIII. Berthier, on hearing of Napoleon's return from Elba, forthwith retired into Germany, and, in a fit of frenzy, threw himself from the window of a house in Bamberg while a Russian corps was passing through that town. Junot had lost his reason. Masséna and Moncey were too old for campaigning; Mortier fell ill before the first shots were fired. Worst of all, the unending task of army organization detained Davoust at Paris. Certainly he worked wonders there; but, as in 1813 and 1814, Napoleon had cause to regret the absence of a lieutenant equally remarkable for his acuteness of perception and doggedness of purpose, for a good fortune that rarely failed, and a devotion that never faltered. Doubtless it was this last priceless quality, as well as his organizing gifts, that marked him out as the ideal Minister of War and Governor of Paris. Besides him he left a Council charged with the government during his absence, composed of Princes Joseph and Lucien and the Ministers.

But, though the French army of 1815 lacked some of the names far famed in story, numbers of zealous and able officers were ready to take their place. The first and second corps were respectively assigned to Drouet, Count d'Erlon, and Reille, the former of whom was the son of the postmaster of Varennes, who stopped Louis XVIII.'s flight. Vandamme commanded the third corps; Gérard, the fourth; Rapp, the fifth; while the sixth fell to Mouton, better known as Count Lobau. Rapp's corps was charged with the defence of Alsace; other forces, led by Brune, Decaen, and Clausel, protected the southern borders, while Suchet guarded the Alps; but the rest of these corps were gradually drawn together towards the north of France, and the addition of the Guard, 20,800 strong, brought the total of this army to 125,000 men.

There was one post which the Emperor found it most difficult to fill, that of Chief of the Staff. There the loss

MARSHAL SOULT.

From an engraving by E. Finden after H. Grevedon.

of Berthier was irreparable. While lacking powers of initiative, he had the faculty of lucidly and quickly drafting Napoleon's orders, which insures the smooth working of the military machine. Who should succeed this skilful and methodical officer? After long hesitation Napoleon chose Soult. In a military sense the choice was excellent. The Duke of Dalmatia had a glorious military record; in his nature activity was blended with caution, ardour with method; but he had little experience of the special duties now required of him; and his orders were neither drafted so clearly nor transmitted so promptly as those of Berthier.

The concentration of this great force proceeded with surprising swiftness; and, in order to lull his foes into confidence, the Emperor delayed his departure from Paris to the last moment possible. As dawn was flushing the eastern sky, on June 12th, he left his couch, after four hours' sleep, entered his landau, and speedily left his slumbering capital behind. In twelve hours he was at Laon. There he found that Grouchy's four cavalry brigades were not sharing in the general advance owing to Soult's neglect to send the necessary orders. The horsemen were at once hurried on, several regiments covering twenty leagues at a stretch and exhausting their steeds. On the 14th the army was well in hand around Beaumont, within striking distance of the Prussian vanguard, from which it was separated by a screen of dense woods. There the Emperor mounted his charger and rode along the ranks, raising such a storm of cheers that he vainly called out: "Not so loud, my children, the enemy will hear you." There, too, on this anniversary of Marengo and Friedland, he inspired his men by a stirring appeal on behalf of the independence of Poles, Italians, the smaller German States, and, above all, of France herself. "For every Frenchman of spirit the time has come to conquer or die."

What, meanwhile, was the position of the allies? An Austro-Sardinian force threatened the south-east of France. Mighty armies of 170,000 Russians and 250,000 Austrians were rolling slowly on towards Lorraine and Alsace respectively; 120,000 Prussians, under Blücher, were cantoned between Liège and Charleroi; while Wellington's

composite array of British, German, and Dutch-Belgian troops, about 100,000 strong, lay between Brussels and Mons.[1] The original plan of these two famous leaders was to push on rapidly into France; but the cautious influences of the Military Council sitting at Vienna prevailed, and it was finally decided not to open the campaign until the Austrians and Russians should approach the frontiers of France. Even as late as June 15th we find Wellington writing to the Czar in terms that assume a co-operation of all the allies in simultaneous moves towards Paris — movements which Schwarzenberg had led him to expect *would begin about the 20th of June*.[2]

From this prolonged and methodical warfare Europe was saved by Napoleon's vigorous offensive. His political instincts impelled him to strike at Brussels, where he hoped that the populace would declare for union with France and severance from the detested Dutch. In this war he must not only conquer armies, he must win over public opinion; and how could he gain it so well as in the guise of a popular liberator? But there were other advantages to be gained in Belgium. By flinging himself on Wellington and the Prussians, and driving them asunder, he would compel Louis XVIII. to another undignified flight; and he would disorganize the best prepared armies of his foes, and gain the material resources of the Low Countries. He seems even to have cherished the hope that a victory over Wellington would dispirit the British Government, unseat the Ministry, and install in power the peace-loving Whigs.

And this victory was almost within his grasp. While his host drew near to the Prussian outposts south of Charleroi and Thuin, the allies were still spread out in canton-

[1] In the "English Hist. Review" for July, 1901, I have published the correspondence between Sir Hudson Lowe (Quartermaster-General of our forces in Belgium up to May, 1815) and Gneisenau, Müffling, and Kleist. These two last were *most reluctant* to send forward Prussian troops into Belgium to guard the weak frontier fortresses from a *coup de main:* but Lowe's arguments prevailed, thus deciding the main features of the war.

[2] "F. O.," France, No. 116. On June 9th the Duke charged Stuart, our envoy at Ghent, to defend this course, on the ground that Blücher and he had many raw troops, and could not advance into France with safety and invest fortresses until the Russians and Austrians co-operated.

ments that extended over one hundred miles, namely, from Liège on Blücher's left to Audenarde on Wellington's right. This wide dispersion of troops, when an enterprising foe was known to be almost within striking distance, has been generally condemned. Thus General Kennedy, in his admirable description of Waterloo, admits that there was an "absurd extension" of the cantonments. Wellington, however, was bound to wait and to watch the three good high-roads, by any one of which Napoleon might advance, namely, those of Tournay, Mons, and Charleroi. The Duke had other causes for extending his lines far to the west: he desired to cover the roads from Ostend, whence he was expecting reinforcements, and to stretch a protecting wing over the King of France at Ghent.

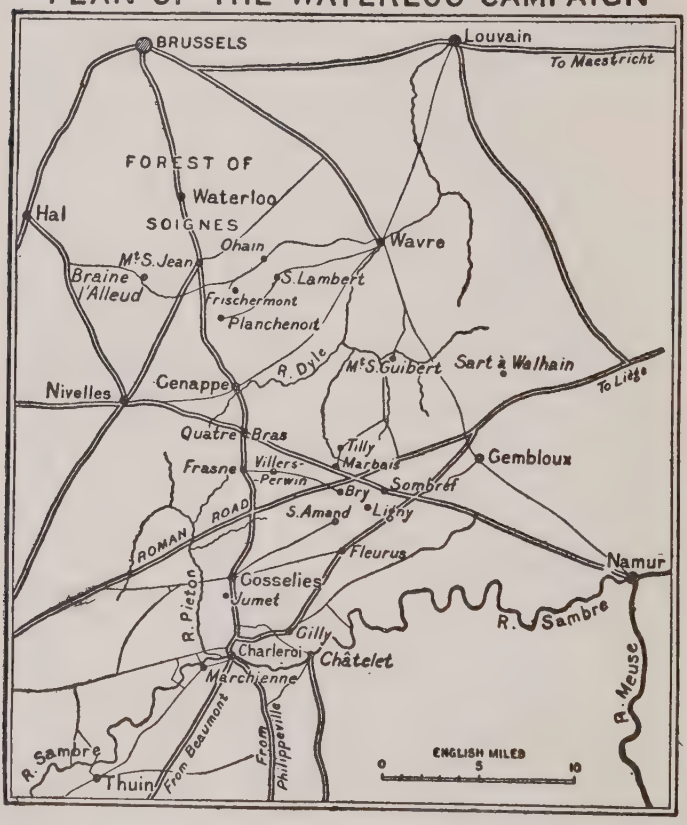
There are many proofs, however, that Wellington was surprised by Napoleon. The narratives of Sir Hussey Vivian and Captain Mercer show that the final orders for our advance were carried out with a haste and flurry that would not have happened if the army had been well in hand, or if Wellington had been fully informed of Napoleon's latest moves.[1] There is a wild story that the Duke was duped by Fouché, on whom he was relying for news from Paris. But it seems far more likely that he was misled by the tidings sent to Louis XVIII. at Ghent by zealous royalists in France, the general purport of which was that Napoleon *would wage a defensive campaign*.[2] On the 13th June, Wellington wrote: "I have accounts from Paris of the 10th, on which day he [Bonaparte] was still there; and I judge from his speech to the Legislature that his departure was not likely to be immediate. I think we are now too strong for him here." And, in later years, he told Earl Stanhope that Napoleon "was certainly wrong in attacking at all"; for the allied armies must soon have been in great straits for want of food if they had advanced into France, exhausted as she was by

[1] Sir H. Vivian states ("Waterloo Letters," No. 70) that the Duke intended to give a ball on June 21st, the anniversary of Vittoria. See too Sir E. Wood's "Cavalry in the Waterloo Campaign," ch. ii.

[2] "F. O.," France, No. 115. A French royalist sent a report, dated June 1st, recommending "point d'engagement avec Bonaparte. . . . Il faut user l'armée de Bonaparte: elle ne peut plus se recruter."

the campaign of 1814. "But," he added, "the fact is, Bonaparte never in his life had patience for a defensive war."

The Duke's forces would, at the outset of the campaign,



have been in less danger, if the leaders at the Prussian outposts, Dörnberg and Pirch II., had given timely warning of the massing of the enemy near the Sambre early on the 15th of June. By some mischance this was not done; and our leader only heard from Hardinge, at the Prussian headquarters, that the enemy seemed about to begin the

offensive. He therefore waited for more definite news before concentrating upon any one line.

About 6 P.M. on the 15th he ordered his divisions and brigades to concentrate at Vilvorde, Brussels, Ninove, Grammont, Ath, Braine-le-Comte, Hal, and Nivelles — the first four of which were somewhat remote, while the others were chosen with a view to defending the roads leading northwards from Mons. Not a single British brigade was posted on the Waterloo-Charleroi road, which was at that time guarded only by a Dutch-Belgian division, a fact which supports Mr. Ropes's contention that no definite plan of co-operation had been formed by the allied leaders. Or, if there was one, the Duke certainly refused to act upon it until he had satisfied himself that the chief attack was not by way of Mons or Ath. More definite news reached Brussels near midnight of the 15th, whereupon he gave a general left turn to his advance, namely, *towards Nivelles*.

Clausewitz maintains that he should already have removed his headquarters to Nivelles; had he done so and hurried up all available troops towards the Soignies-Quatre Bras line, his Waterloo fame would certainly have gained in solidity. A dash of romance was added by his attending the Duchess of Richmond's ball at Brussels on the night of the 15th–16th; lovers of the picturesque will always linger over the scene that followed with its "hurrying to and fro and tremblings of distress"; but the more prosaic inquirer may doubt whether Wellington should not then have been more to the front, feeling every throb of Bellona's pulse.[1]

Blücher's army, comprising 90,000 men, also covered a great stretch of country. The first corps, that of Ziethen, held the bridges of the Sambre at and near Charleroi; but the corps of Pirch I. and Thielmann were at Namur and Ciney; while, owing to a lack of stringency in the orders sent by Gneisenau, chief of the staff, to Bülow, his corps of 32,000 men was still at Liège. Early on the 15th, Pirch I. and Thielmann began hastily to advance towards

[1] Ropes's "Campaign of Waterloo," ch. v.; Chesney, "Waterloo Lectures," p. 100; Sir H. Maxwell's "Wellington" (vol. ii., p. 14); and O'Connor Morris, "Campaign of 1815," p. 97.

Sombref; and Ziethen, with 32,000 men, prepared to hold the line of the Sambre as long as possible. His chief of staff, General Reiche, states that one-third of the Prussians were new troops, drafted in from the Landwehr; but all the corps gloried in their veteran Field-Marshal, and were eager to fight.

Such, then, was the general position. Wellington was unaware of his danger; Blücher was straining every nerve to get his army together; while 32,000 Prussians were exposed to the attack of nearly four times their number. It is clear that, had all gone well with the French advance, the fortunes of Wellington and Blücher must have been desperate. But, though the concentration of 125,000 French troops near Beaumont and Maubeuge had been effected with masterly skill (except that Gérard's and D'Erlon's corps were late), the final moves did not work quite smoothly. An accident to the officer who was to order Vandamme's corps to march at 2 A.M. on the 15th caused a long delay to that eager fighter.[1] The 4th corps, that of Gérard, was also disturbed and delayed by an untoward event. General Bourmont, whose old Vendéan opinions seemed to have melted away completely before the sun of Napoleon's glory, rewarded his master by deserting with several officers to the Prussians, very early on that morning. The incident was really of far less importance than is assigned to it in the St. Helena Memoirs, which falsely ascribe it to the 14th: the Prussians were already on the *qui vive* before Bourmont's desertion; but it clogged the advance of Gérard's corps and fostered distrust among the rank and file. When, on the morrow, Gérard rejoined his chief at the mill of Fleurus, the latter reminded him that he had answered for Bourmont's fidelity with his own head; and, on the general protesting that he had seen Bourmont fight with the utmost devotion, Napoleon replied: "Bah! A man who has been a white will never become a blue: and a blue will never be a white." Significant words, that show the Emperor's belief in the ineradicable strength of instinct and early training.[2]

[1] Janin, "Campagne de Waterloo," p. 7.
[2] Pétiet, "Souvenirs militaires," p. 195.

Despite these two mishaps, the French on the morning of the 15th succeeded in driving Ziethen's men from the banks of the Sambre about Thuin, while Napoleon in person broke through their line at Charleroi. After suffering rather severely, the defenders fell back on Gilly, whither Napoleon and his main force followed them; while the left wing of the French advance, now intrusted to Ney, was swung forward against the all-important position of Quatre Bras.

We here approach one of the knotty questions of the campaign. Why did not Ney occupy the cross-roads in force on the evening of the 15th? We may note first that not till the 11th had Napoleon thought fit to summon Ney to the army, so that the Marshal did not come up till the afternoon of this very day. He at once had an interview with the Emperor, who, according to General Gourgaud, gave the Marshal verbal orders to take command of the corps of Reille and D'Erlon, to push on northwards, take up a position at Quatre Bras, and throw out advanced posts beyond on the Brussels and Namur roads; but it seems unlikely that the Emperor would have given one of the most venturesome of his Marshals an absolute order to push on so far in advance, unless the French right wing had driven the Prussians back beyond the Sombref position. Otherwise, Ney would have been dangerously far in advance of the main body, and exposed to blows either from the Prussians or the British.

However this may be, Ney certainly felt insecure, and did not push on with his wonted dash; while, fortunately for the allies, an officer was at hand, Prince Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, who saw the need of holding Quatre Bras at all costs.[1] The young leader imposed on the foe by making the most of his men — they were but 4,500 all told, and had only ten bullets apiece — and he succeeded. For once, Ney was prudent to a fault, and did not push home the attack. In his excuse it may be said that the

[1] Credit is primarily due to Constant de Rebecque, a Belgian, chief of staff to the Prince of Orange, for altering the point of concentration from Nivelles, as ordered by Wellington, to Quatre Bras; also to General Perponcher for supporting the new movement. The Belgian side of the campaign has been well set forth by Boulger in "The Belgians at Waterloo" (1901).

men of Reille's corps, on whom he had to rely — for D'Erlon's corps was still far to the rear — had been marching and fighting ever since dawn, and were too weary for another battle. Moreover, the roar of cannon on the south-east warned him that the right wing of the French advance was hotly engaged between Gilly and Fleurus; until it beat back the Prussians, his own position was dangerously "in the air"; and, as but two hours of daylight remained, he drew back on Frasnes. He is also said to have sent word to the Emperor that "he was occupying Quatre Bras by an advanced guard, and that his main body was close behind." If he deceived his chief by any such report, he deserves the severest censure; but the words quoted above were written later at St. Helena by General Gourgaud, when Ney had come to figure as the scapegoat of the campaign.[1] Ney sent in a report on that evening; but it has been lost.[2] Judging from the orders issued by Napoleon and Soult early on the 16th, there was much uncertainty as to Ney's position. The Emperor's letter bids him post his first division "two leagues in front of les Quatres Chemins"; but Soult's letter to Grouchy states that Ney is ordered *to advance to the cross-roads*. Confusion was to be expected from the circumstances of the case. Ney did not know his staff-officers, and he hastily took command of the left wing when in the midst of operations whose success, as Janin points out, largely depended on that of the right. He therefore played a cautious game, when, as we now know, caution meant failure and daring spelt safety.

Meanwhile the French right wing, of which Grouchy had received the command, though Napoleon in person was its moving force, had been pressing the Prussians hard near Gilly. Yet here, too, the assailants were weakened by the absence of the corps of Vandamme and Gérard. Irritated by Ziethen's skilful withdrawal, the Emperor at last launched his cavalry at the Prussian rear battalions, four of which were severely handled before they reached the covert of a wood. With the loss, on the whole, of nearly 2,000 men, the Prussians

[1] Gourgaud, "Campagne de 1815," ch. iv.
[2] Houssaye, "1815," pp. 133-138, 186, notes.

fell back towards Ligny, while Grouchy's vanguard bivouacked near the village of Fleurus.

Napoleon might well be satisfied with the work done on June 15th: he rode back to his headquarters at Charleroi, "exhausted with fatigue," after spending wellnigh eighteen hours in the saddle, but confident that he had sundered the allies. This was certainly his aim now, as it had been in the campaign of 1796. After two decisive blows at their points of connection, he purposed driving them on divergent lines of retreat, just as he had driven the Austrians and Sardinians down the roads that bifurcate near Montenotte. True, there were in Belgium no mountain spurs to prevent their reunion; but the roads on which they were operating were far more widely divergent.[1] He also thought lightly of Wellington and Blücher. The former he had pronounced "incapable and unwise"; as for Blücher, he told Campbell at Elba that he was "no general"; but that he admired the pluck with which "the old devil" came on again after a thrashing.

Unclouded confidence is seen in every phrase of the letters that he penned at Charleroi early on the 16th. He informs Ney that he intends soon to attack the Prussians at Sombref, *if he finds them there*, to clear the road as far as Gembloux, and then to decide on his further actions as the case demands. Meanwhile Ney is to sweep the road in front of Quatre Bras, placing his first division two leagues beyond that position, if it seemed desirable, with a view to marching on Brussels during the night with his whole force of about 50,000 men. The Guard is to be kept in reserve as much as possible, so as to support either Napoleon on the Gembloux road, or Ney on the Brussels road; and "if any skirmish takes place with the English, it is preferable that the work should fall on the Line rather than on the Guard." As for the Prussian resistance, Napoleon rated it almost as lightly as that of the English; for he regards it as probable that he will in the evening *march on Brussels with his Guard*.

While he pictured his enemies hopelessly scattered or in retreat, they were beginning to muster at the very points which he believed to be within his grasp. At

[1] Hamley, "Operations of War," p. 187.

11 A.M. only Ziethen's corps, now but 28,000 strong, was in position at Sombref, but the corps of Pirch I. and Thielmann came up shortly after midday. Had Napoleon pushed on early on the 16th, he must easily have gained the Ligny-Sombref position. What, then, caused the delay in the French attack? It can be traced to the slowness of Gérard's advance, to the Emperor's misconception of the situation, and to his despatch to Grouchy. In this he reckoned the Prussians at 40,000 men, and ordered Grouchy to repair with the French right wing to Sombref.

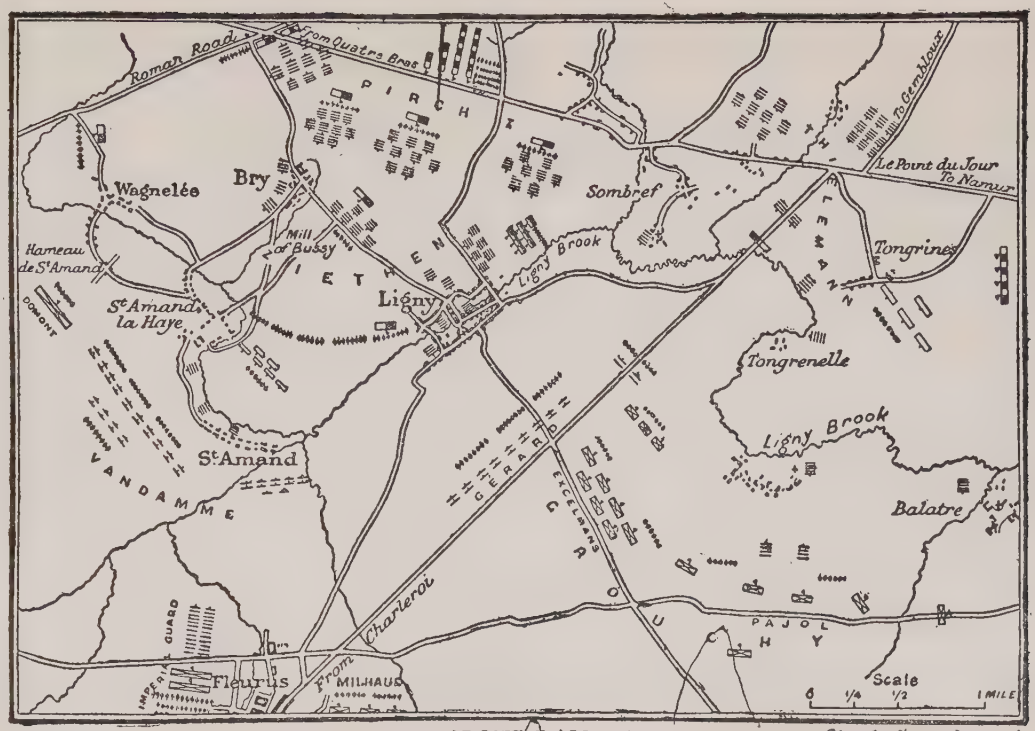
". . . I shall be at Fleurus between 10 and 11 A.M.: I shall proceed to Sombref, leaving my Guard, both infantry and cavalry, at Fleurus: I would not take it to Sombref, unless it should be necessary. If the enemy is at Sombref, I mean to attack him: I mean to attack him even at Gembloux, and to gain this position also, my aim being, after having known about these two positions, to set out to-night, and to operate with my left wing, under the command of Marshal Ney, against the English.

The Emperor did not reach Fleurus until close on 11 A.M., and was undoubtedly taken aback to find Grouchy still there, held in check by the enemy strongly posted around Ligny. Grouchy has been blamed for not having already attacked them; but surely his orders bound him to wait for the Emperor before giving battle: besides, the corps of Gérard, which had been assigned to him, was still far away in the rear toward Châtelet.[1] The absence of Gérard, and the uncertainty as to the enemy's aims, annoyed the Emperor. He mounted the windmill situated on the outskirts of Fleurus to survey the enemy's position.

It was a fair scene that lay before him. Straight in front ran the high-road which joined the Namur-Nivelles *chaussée*, some six miles away to the north-east. On either side stretched cornfields, whose richness bore witness alike to the toils and the warlike passions of mankind. Further ahead might be seen the dark lines of the enemy ranged along slopes that formed an irregular amphitheatre, dotted with the villages of Bry and Sombref. In the middle dis-

[1] For Gérard's delays see Houssaye, p. 158, and Horsburgh, "Waterloo," p. 36. Napoleon's tardiness is scarcely noticed by Houssaye or by Gourgaud; but it has been censured by Jomini, Charras, Clausewitz, and Lord Wolseley.

BATTLE OF LIGNY.



ORDER OF BATTLE ABOUT 3 P.M.

Stanford's Geog.l Estab.t

tance, from out a hollow that lay concealed, rose the steeples and a few of the higher roofs of Ligny. Further to the left and on higher ground lay St. Amand, with its outlying hamlets. All was bathed in the shimmering, sultry heat of midsummer, the harbinger, as it proved, of a violent thunderstorm. The Prussian position was really stronger than it seemed. Napoleon could not fully see either the osier beds that fringed the Ligny brook, or its steep banks, or the many strong buildings of Ligny itself. He saw the Prussians on the slope behind the village, and was at first puzzled by their exposed position. "The old fox keeps to earth," he was heard to mutter. And so he waited until matters should clear up, and Gérard's arrival should give him strength to compass Blücher's utter overthrow while in the act of stretching a feeler towards Wellington. From the time when the Emperor came on the scene to the first swell of the battle's roar, there was a space of more than four hours.

This delay was doubly precious to the allies. It gave Blücher time to bring up the corps of Pirch I. and Thielmann under cover of the high ground near Sombref, thereby raising his total force to about 87,000 men; and it enabled the two allied commanders to meet and hastily confer on the situation. Wellington had left Brussels that morning at 8 o'clock, and thanks to Ney's inaction, was able to reach the crest south of Quatre Bras a little after 10, long before the enemy showed any signs of life. There he penned a note to Blücher, asking for news from him before deciding on his operations for the day.[1] He then galloped over to the windmill of Bussy to meet Blücher. It was an anxious meeting; the heads of the advancing French columns were already in sight; and the

[1] Ollech (p. 125) sees in it an offer of help to Blücher. But on what ground? It states that the Prince of Orange has one division at Quatre Bras and other troops at Nivelles: that the British reserve would reach Genappe at noon, and their cavalry Nivelles at the same hour. How could Blücher hope for help from forces so weak and scattered? See too Ropes (note to ch. x.). Horsburgh (ch. v.) shows that Wellington believed his forces to be more to the front than they were: he traces the error to De Lancey, chief of the staff. But it is fair to add that Wellington thought very highly of De Lancey, and after his death at Waterloo severely blamed subordinates.

Duke saw with dismay the position of the Prussians on a slope that must expose them to the full force of Napoleon's cannon — or, as he whispered to Hardinge, "they will be damnably mauled if they fight here."[1] In more decorous terms, but to the same effect, he warned Blücher, and said nothing to encourage him to hold fast to his position. Neither did he lead him to expect aid from Quatre Bras. The utmost that Gneisenau could get from him was the promise, "Well! I will come provided I am not attacked myself." Did these words induce the Prussians to accept battle at Ligny? It is impossible to think so. Everything tends to show that Blücher had determined to fight there. The risk was great; for, as we learn from General Reiche, the position was seen to admit of no vigorous offensive blows against the French. But fortune smiled on the veteran Field-Marshal, and averted what might have been an irretrievable disaster.[2]

It would seem that the inequalities of the ground hid the strength of Pirch I. and Thielmann; for Napoleon still believed that he had ranged against him at Ligny only a single corps. At 2 P.M. Soult informed Ney that the enemy had united a *corps* between Sombref and Bry, and that in half an hour Grouchy would attack it. Ney was therefore to beat back the foes at Quatre Bras, and then turn to envelop the Prussians. *But if these were driven in first, the Emperor would move towards Ney to hasten his operations.*[3] Not until the battle was about to begin does the Emperor seem to have realized that he was in presence of superior forces.[4] But after 2 P.M. their masses drew down over the slopes of Bry and Sombref, their foremost troops held the villages of Ligny and St. Amand, while their left crowned the ridge of Tongrines. Napoleon re-

[1] Stanhope, "Conversations," p. 109.

[2] Reiche, "Memoiren," vol. ii., p. 183.

[3] The term *corps* is significant. Not till 3.15 did Soult use the term *armée* in speaking of Blücher's forces. The last important sentence of the 2 P.M. despatch is not given by Houssaye (p. 159), but is printed by Ropes (p. 383), Siborne (vol. i., p. 453), Charras (vol. i., p. 136), and Ollech (p. 131). It proves that *as late as* 2 P.M. Napoleon expected an easy victory over the Prussians.

[4] The best authorities give the Prussians 87,000 men, and the French 78,000; but the latter estimate includes the corps of Lobau, 10,000 strong, which did not reach Fleurus till dark.

formed his lines, which had hitherto been at right angles to the main road through Fleurus. Vandamme's corps moved off towards St. Amand ; and Gérard, after ranging his corps parallel to that road, began to descend towards Ligny, Grouchy meanwhile marshalling the cavalry to protect their flank and rear. Behind all stood the imposing mass of the Imperial Guard on the rising ground near Fleurus.

The fiercest shock of battle fell upon the corps of Vandamme and Gérard. Three times were Gérard's men driven back by the volleys of the Prussians holding Ligny. But the French cannon open fire with terrific effect. Roofs crumble away, and buildings burst into flame. Once more the French rush to the onset, and a furious hand-to-hand scuffle ensues. Half stifled by heat, smoke, and dust, the rival nations fight on, until the defenders give way and fall back on the further part of the village behind the brook ; but, when reinforced, they rally as fiercely as ever, and drive the French over its banks; lane, garden, and attic once more become the scene of struggles where no man thinks of giving or taking quarter.

Higher up the stream, at St. Amand, Vandamme's troops fared no better; for Blücher steadily fed that part of his array. In so doing, however, he weakened his reserves behind Ligny, thereby unwittingly favouring Napoleon's design of breaking the Prussian centre, and placing its wreckage and the whole of their right wing between two fires. The Emperor expected that, by 6 o'clock, Ney would have driven back the Anglo-Dutch forces, and would be ready to envelop the Prussian right. That was the purport of Soult's despatch of 3.15 P.M. to Ney: "This army [the Prussian] is lost, if you act with vigour. The fate of France is in your hands."

But at 5.30, when part of the Imperial Guard was about to strengthen Gérard for the decisive blow at the Prussian centre, Vandamme sent word that a hostile force of some twenty or thirty thousand men was marching towards Fleurus. This strange apparition not only unsteadied the French left: it greatly perplexed the Emperor. As he had ordered first Ney and then D'Erlon

to march, not on Fleurus, but against the rear of the Prussian right wing, he seems to have concluded that this new force must be that of Wellington about to deal the like deadly blow against the French rear.[1] Accordingly he checked the advance of the Guard until the riddle could be solved. After the loss of nearly two hours it was solved by an aide-de-camp, who found that the force was D'Erlon's, and that it had retired.

Meanwhile the battle had raged with scarcely a pause, the French guns working frightful havoc among the dense masses on the opposite slope. And yet, by withdrawing troops to his right, Blücher had for a time overborne Vandamme's corps and part of the Young Guard, unconscious that his insistence on this side jeopardized the whole Prussian army. His great adversary had long marked the immense extension of its concave front, the massing of its troops against St. Amand, and the remoteness of its left wing, which Grouchy's horsemen still held in check; and he now planned that, while Blücher assailed St. Amand and its hamlets, the Imperial Guard should crush the Prussian centre at Ligny, thrust its fragments back towards St. Amand, and finally shiver the greater part of the Prussian army on the anvil which D'Erlon's corps would provide further to the west. He now felt assured of victory; for the corps of Lobau was nearing Fleurus to take the place of the Imperial Guard; and the Prussians had no supports. "They have no reserve," he remarked, as he swept the hostile position with his glass. This was true: their centre consisted of troops that for four hours had been either torn by artillery or exhausted by the fiendish strife in Ligny.

And now, as if the pent-up powers of Nature sought to cow rebellious man into awe and penitence, the artillery of the sky pealed forth. Crash after crash shook the ground; flash upon flash rent the sulphur-laden rack; darkness as of night stole over the scene; and a deluge

[1] I follow Houssaye's solution of this puzzle as the least unsatisfactory, but it does not show why Napoleon should have been so perplexed. D'Erlon debouched from the wood of Villers Perwin *exactly where he might have been expected.* Was Napoleon puzzled because the corps was heading south-east instead of east?

of rain washed the blood-stained earth. The storm served but to aid the assailants in their last and fiercest efforts. Amidst the gloom the columns of the Imperial Guard crept swiftly down the slope towards Ligny, gave new strength to Gérard's men, and together with them broke through the defence. A little higher up the stream, Milhaud's cuirassiers struggled across, and, animated by the Emperor's presence, poured upon the shattered Prussian centre. No timely help could it now receive either from Blücher or Thielmann ; for the darkness of the storm had shrouded from view the beginnings of the onset, and Thielmann had just suffered from a heedless assault on Grouchy's wing.

As the thunder-clouds rolled by, the gleams of the setting sun lit up the field and revealed to Blücher the full extent of his error.[1] His army was cut in twain. In vain did he call in his troops from St. Amand : in vain did he gallop back to his squadrons between Bry and Sombref and lead them forward. Their dashing charge was suddenly checked at the brink of a hollow way ; steady volleys tore away their front ; and the cuirassiers completed their discomfiture. Blücher's charger was struck by a bullet, and in his fall badly bruised the Field-Marshal ; but his trusty adjutant, Nostitz, managed to hide him in the twilight, while the cuirassiers swept onwards up the hill. Other Prussian squadrons, struggling to save the day, now charged home and drove back the steel-clad ranks. Some Uhlans and mounted Landwehr reached the place where the hero lay ; and Nostitz was able to save that precious life. Sorely battered, but still defiant like their chief, the Prussian cavalry covered the retreat at the centre ; the wings fell back in good order, the right holding on to the village of Bry till past midnight ; but several battalions of disaffected troops broke up and did not rejoin their comrades. About 14,000 Prussians and 11,000 French lay dead or wounded on that fatal field.[2]

[1] Delbrück (" Gneisenau," vol. ii., p. 190) shows how the storm favoured the attack.

[2] I here follow Delbrück's " Gneisenau " (vol. ii., p. 194) and Charras (vol. i., p. 163). Reiche (" Mems.," vol. ii., p. 193) says that his corps of 30,800 men lost 12,480 on the 15th and 16th : he notes that Blücher and Nostitz probably owed their escape to the plainness of their uniforms and headgear.

Napoleon, as he rode back to Fleurus after nightfall, could claim that he had won a great victory. Yet he had not achieved the results portrayed in Soult's despatch of 3.15 to Ney. This was due partly to Ney's failure to fulfil his part of the programme, and partly to the apparition of D'Erlon's corps, which led to the postponement of Napoleon's grand attack on Ligny.

The mystery as to the movements of D'Erlon and his 20,000 men has never been fully cleared up. The evidence collected by Houssaye leaves little doubt that, as soon as the Emperor realized the serious nature of the conflict at Ligny, he sent orders to D'Erlon, whose vanguard was then near Frasnes, to diverge and attack Blücher's exposed flank. That is to say, D'Erlon was now called on to deal the decisive blow which had before been assigned to Ney, who was now warned, though very tardily, not to rely on the help of D'Erlon's corps. Misunderstanding his order, D'Erlon made for Fleurus, and thus alarmed Napoleon and delayed his final blow for wellnigh two hours. Moreover, at 6 P.M., when D'Erlon might have assailed Blücher's right with crushing effect, he received an urgent command from Ney to return. Assuredly he should not have hesitated now that St. Amand was almost within cannon-shot, while Quatre Bras could scarcely be reached before nightfall; but he was under Ney's command; and, taking a rather pedantic view of the situation, he obeyed his immediate superior. Lastly, no one has explained why the Emperor, as soon as he knew the errant corps to be that of D'Erlon, did not recall him at once, bidding him fall on the exposed wing of the Prussians. Doubtless he assumed that D'Erlon would now fulfil his instructions and march against Bry; but he gave no order to this effect, and the unlucky corps vanished.

At that time a desperate conflict was drawing to a close at Quatre Bras. Ney had delayed his attack until 2 P.M.; for, firstly, Reille's corps alone was at hand — D'Erlon's rearguard early on that morning being still near Thuin — and, secondly, the Marshal heard at 10 A.M. that Prussian columns were marching westwards from Sombref, a move that would endanger his rear behind Frasnes. Furthermore, the approach to Quatre Bras was flanked by the

extensive Bossu Wood, and by a spinney to the right of the highway. Reille therefore counselled caution, lest the affair should prove to be "a Spanish battle where the English show themselves only when it is time." When, however, Reille's corps pushed home the attack, the weakness of the defence was speedily revealed. After a stout stand, the 7,000 Dutch-Belgians under the Prince of Orange were driven from the farm of Gémioncourt, which formed the key of the position, and many of them fled from the field.

But at this crisis the Iron Duke himself rode up; and the arrival of a Dutch-Belgian brigade and of Picton's division of British infantry, about 3 P.M., sufficed to snatch victory from the Marshal's grasp.[1] He now opened a destructive artillery fire on our front, to which the weak Dutch-Belgian batteries could but feebly reply. Nothing, however, could daunt the hardihood of Picton's men. Shaking off the fatigue of a twelve hours' march from Brussels under a burning sun, they steadily moved down through the tall crops of rye towards the farm and beat off a fierce attack of Piré's horsemen. On the allied left, the 95th Rifles (now the Rifle Brigade) and Brunswickers kept a clutch on the Namur road which nothing could loosen. But our danger was mainly at the centre. Under cover of the farmhouse, French columns began to drive in our infantry, whose ammunition was already running low. Wellington determined to crush this onset by a counter-attack in line of Picton's division, the "fighting division" of the Peninsula. With threatening shouts they advanced to the charge; and before that moving wall the foe fell back in confusion beyond the rivulet.

Still, the French drove back the Dutch in the wood, and the Brunswickers on its eastern fringe, killing the brave young Duke of Brunswick as he attempted to rally his raw recruits. Into the gap thus left the French horsemen pushed forward, making little impression upon our footmen, but compelling them to keep in a close formation, which exposed them in the intervals between the charges to heavy losses from the French cannon.

[1] "Waterloo Letters," Nos. 163 and 169, prove that the time was 3 P.M. and not 3.30; see also Kincaid's account in Fitchett's "Wellington's Men" (p. 120).

So the afternoon wore on. Between 5 and 6 o'clock our weary troops were reinforced by Alten's division. A little later, a brigade of Kellermann's heavy cavalry came up from the rear and renewed Ney's striking power — but again too late. Already he was maddened by the tidings that D'Erlon's corps had been ordered off towards Ligny, and next by Napoleon's urgent despatch of 3.15 P.M. bidding him envelop Blücher's right. Blind with indignation at this seeming injustice, he at once sent an imperative summons to D'Erlon to return towards Quatre Bras, and launched a brigade of Kellermann's cuirassiers at those stubborn squares.

The attack nearly succeeded. The horsemen rushed upon our 69th Regiment just when the Prince of Orange had foolishly ordered it back into line, caught it in confusion, and cut it up badly. Another regiment, the 33rd, fled into the wood, but afterwards re-formed ; the other squares beat off the onset. The torrent, however, only swerved aside : on it rushed almost to the cross-roads, there to be stopped by a flanking fire from the wood and from the 92nd (Gordon) Highlanders lining the roadway in front. — "Ninety-second, don't fire till I tell you," exclaimed the Duke. The volley rang out when the horsemen were but thirty paces off. The effect was magical. Their front was torn asunder, and the survivors made off in a panic that spread to Foy's battalions of foot and disordered the whole array.[1]

Ney still persisted in his isolated assaults ; but reinforcements were now at hand that brought up Wellington's total to 31,000 men, while the French were less than 21,000. At nightfall the Marshal drew back to Frasnes ; and there D'Erlon's errant corps at last appeared. Thanks to conflicting orders, it had oscillated between two battles and taken part in neither of them.

Such was the bloody fight of Quatre Bras. It cost Wellington 4,600 killed and wounded, mainly from the flower of the British infantry, three Highland regiments losing as many as 878 men. The French losses were somewhat lighter. Few conflicts better deserve the name of soldiers' battles. On neither side was the

[1] "Waterloo Letters," No. 169.

generalship brilliant. Twilight set in before an adequate force of British cavalry and artillery approached the field where their comrades on foot had for five hours held up in unequal contest against cannon, sabre, and lance. The victory was due to the strange power of the British soldier to save the situation when it seems past hope.

Still less did it redound to the glory of Ney. Once more he had merited the name of bravest of the brave. At the crisis of the fight, when the red squares in front defied his utmost efforts, he brandished his sword in helpless wrath, praying that the bullets that flew by might strike him down. The rage of battle had, in fact, partly obscured his reason. He was now a fighter, scarcely a commander; and to this cause we may attribute his neglect adequately to support Kellermann's charge. Had this been done, Quatre Bras might have ended like Marengo. Far more serious, however, was his action in countermanding the Emperor's orders by recalling D'Erlon to Quatre Bras; for, as we have seen, it robbed his master of the decisive victory that he had the right to expect at Ligny. Yet this error must not be unduly magnified. It is true that Napoleon at 3.15 sent a despatch to Ney bidding him envelop Blücher's flank; but the order did not reach him until some time after 5, when the allies were pressing him hard, and when he had just heard of D'Erlon's deflection towards the Emperor's battle.[1] He must have seen that his master misjudged the situation at Quatre Bras; and in such circumstances a Marshal of France was not without excuse when he corrected an order which he saw to be based on a misunderstanding. Some part of the blame must surely attach to the slow-paced D'Erlon and to the Emperor himself, who first underrated the difficulties both at Ligny and Quatre Bras, and then changed his plans when Ney was in the midst of a furious fight.

Nevertheless, the general results obtained on June the 16th were enormously in favour of Napoleon. He had inflicted losses on the Prussians comparable with those of Jena-Auerstädt; and he retired to rest at Fleurus with the conviction that they must hastily fall back on

[1] See Houssaye, p. 205, for the sequence of these events.

their immediate bases of supply, Namur and Liège, leaving Wellington at his mercy. The rules of war and the dictates of humdrum prudence certainly prescribed this course for a beaten army, especially as Bülow's corps was known to be on the Liège road.

Scarcely had the Prussian retreat begun in the darkness, when officers pressed up to Gneisenau, on whom now devolved all responsibility, for instructions as to the line of march. At once he gave the order to push northwards to Tilly. General Reiche thereupon pointed out that this village was not marked upon the smaller maps with which colonels were provided; whereupon the command was given to march towards the town of Wavre, farther distant on the same road. An officer was posted at the junction of roads to prevent regiments straying towards Namur; but some had already gone too far on this side to be recalled — a fact which was to confuse the French pursuers on the morrow. The greater part of Thielmann's corps had fallen back on Gembloux; but, with these exceptions, the mass of the Prussians made for Tilly, near which place they bivouacked. Early on the next morning their rearguard drew off from Sombref; and, thanks to the inertness of their foes, the line of retreat remained unknown. During the march to Wavre, their columns were cheered by the sight of the dauntless old Field-Marshal, who was able to sit a horse once more. Thielmann's corps did not leave Gembloux till 2 P.M., but reached Wavre in safety. Meanwhile Bülow's powerful corps was marching unmolested from the Roman road near Hannut to a position two miles east of Wavre, where it arrived at nightfall. Equally fortunate was the reserve ammunition train, which, unnoticed by the French cavalry, wound northwards by cross-roads through Gembloux, and reached the army by 5 P.M.[1]

In his "Commentaries," written at St. Helena, Napoleon sharply criticised the action of Gneisenau in retreat-

[1] Ollech, pp. 167–171. Colonel Basil Jackson, in his "Waterloo and St. Helena" (printed for private circulation), p. 64, states that he had been employed in examining and reporting on the Belgian roads and did so on the road leading south from Wavre. This report had been sent to Gneisenau, and must have given him greater confidence on the night of the 16th.

ing northwards to Wavre, because that town is farther distant from Wellington's line of retreat than Sombref is from Quatre Bras, and is connected with it only by difficult cross-roads. He even asserted that the Prussians ought to have made for Quatre Bras, a statement which presumes that Gneisenau could have rallied his army sufficiently after Ligny to file away on the Quatre Bras *chaussée* in front of Napoleon's victorious legions. But the Prussian army was virtually cut in half, and could not have reunited so as to attempt the perilous flank march across Napoleon's front. We shall, therefore, probably not be far wrong if we say of this criticism that the wish was father to the thought. A march on Quatre Bras would have been a safe means of throwing away the Prussian army.[1]

To the present writer it seems probable that Gneisenau's action, in the first instance, was undertaken as the readiest means of reuniting the Prussian wings. But Gneisenau cannot have been blind to the advantages of a reunion with Wellington, which a northerly march would open out. The report which he sent to his Sovereign from Wavre shows that by that time he believed the Prussian position to be "not disadvantageous"; while in a private letter written at noon on the 17th he expressly states that the Duke will accept battle at Waterloo if the Prussians help him with two army corps. Gneisenau's only doubts seem to have been whether Wellington would fight and whether his own ammunition would be to hand in time. Until he was sure on these two points caution was certainly necessary.

The results of this prompt rally of the Prussians were infinitely enhanced by the fact that Wellington soon found it out, while Napoleon did not grasp its full import until

[1] O'Connor Morris, p. 176, approves Napoleon's criticism, and censures Gneisenau's move on Wavre: but surely Wavre combined more advantages than any other position. It was accessible for the whole Prussian army (including Bülow); it was easily defensible (as the event proved); and it promised a reunion with Wellington for the defence of Brussels. Houssaye says (p. 233) that Gneisenau did not at once foresee the immense consequences of his action. Of course he did not, because he was not sure of Wellington; but he took all the steps that might lead to immense consequences, if all went well.

he was in the thick of the battle of Waterloo. To the final steps that led up to this dramatic finale we must now briefly refer.

It is strange that Gneisenau, on the night of the 16th, took no steps to warn his allies of the Prussian retreat, and merely left them to infer it from his last message, that he must do so if he were not succoured. Müffling, indeed, says that a Prussian officer was sent, but was shot by the French on the British left wing. Seeing, however, that Wellington had beaten back Ney's forces before the Prussian retreat began, the story may be dismissed as a lame excuse of Gneisenau's neglect.[1]

From the risk of being crushed by Napoleon, the Anglo-Dutch forces were saved by the vigilance of their leader and the supineness of the enemy. After a brief rest at Genappe, the Duke was back at the front at dawn, and despatched two cavalry patrols towards Sombref to find out the results of the battle. The patrol, which was accompanied by the Duke's aide-de-camp, Colonel Gordon, came into touch with the Prussian rear. On his return soon after 10, the staff-officer, Basil Jackson, was at once sent to bid Picton immediately prepare to fall back on Waterloo, an order which that veteran received very sulkily.[2] Shortly after Gordon's return, a Prussian orderly galloped up and confirmed the news of their retreat, which drew from the Duke the remark: "Blücher has had a d—d good licking and gone back to Wavre. . . . As he has gone back, we must go too." The infantry now began to file off by degrees behind hedges or under cover of a screen of cavalry and skirmishers, these keeping Ney's men busy in front, until the bulk of the army was well through the narrow and crowded street of Genappe.

And how came it that Napoleon and Ney missed this golden opportunity? In the first case, it was due to their chiefs of staff, who had not sent overnight any tidings as to the results of their respective battles. Until Count Flahaut returned to the Imperial headquarters about

[1] Müffling, "Passages," p. 238: Charras, vol. i., p. 226, discredits it.

[2] Basil Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 24; Cotton, "A Voice from Waterloo," p. 20.

8 A.M., Napoleon knew nothing as to the position of affairs at Quatre Bras; while a similar carelessness on Soult's part left Ney powerless to attempt anything against Wellington until somewhat later in the morning.

But Napoleon's inaction lasted nearly up to 11.30. How is this to be accounted for? In reply, some attribute his conduct to illness of body and torpor of mind — a topic that will engage our attention presently; others assert that the army urgently needed rest; but the effective cause was his belief that the Prussians were retreating eastwards away from Wellington. This was the universal belief at headquarters. He had ordered Grouchy to follow them at dawn; Grouchy's lieutenant, Pajol, struck to the south-east, and by 4 A.M. reported that Blücher was heading for Namur. Such was the news that the Emperor heard from Grouchy about 8 A.M. — he refused to grant him an audience earlier. Forthwith he dictated a letter to Ney to the following effect: that the Prussians had been routed and were being pursued towards Namur; that the British could not attack him (Ney) at Quatre Bras, for the Emperor would in that case march on their flank and destroy them in an instant; that he heard with pain how isolated Ney's troops had been on the 16th, and ordered him to close up his divisions and occupy Quatre Bras. If he could not effect that task, he must warn the Emperor, who would then come. Finally, he warned him that "the present day is needed to finish this operation, to complete the munitions of war, to rally stragglers and call in detachments."

A singular day's programme this for the man who had trebled the results of the victory of Jena by the remorseless energy of the pursuit. After dictating this despatch, he ordered Lobau to take a division of infantry for the support of Pajol on the Namur road. He then set out for St. Amand in his carriage. On arriving at the place of carnage he mounted his horse and rode slowly over the battle-field, seeing to the needs of the wounded of both nations with kindly care, and everywhere receiving the enthusiastic acclaim of his soldiery. This done, he dismounted and talked long and earnestly with Grouchy, Gérard, and others on the state of political

parties at Paris. They listened with ill-concealed restlessness. At Fleurus Grouchy asked for definite orders, and received the brusque reply that he must wait. But now, towards 11 o'clock, the Emperor hears that Wellington is still at Quatre Bras, that Pajol has captured eight Prussian guns on the Namur road, and that Excelmans has seen masses of the enemy at Gembloux. At once he turns from politics to war.

His plan is formed. While he himself falls on the British, Grouchy is to pursue the Prussians with the corps of Gérard and Vandamme, the division of Teste (from Lobau's command), and the cavalry corps of Pajol, Excelmans, and Milhaud. The Marshal begged to be relieved of the task, setting forth the danger of pursuing foes that were now reunited and far away. It was in vain. About 11.30 the Emperor developed his verbal instructions in a written order penned by Bertrand. It bade Grouchy proceed to Gembloux with the forces stated above (except Milhaud's corps and a division of Vandamme's corps, which were to follow Napoleon) to reconnoitre on the roads leading to Namur and Maestricht, to pursue the enemy, and inform the Emperor as to their intentions. If they have evacuated Namur, it is to be occupied by the National Guards. "It is important to know what Blücher and Wellington mean to do, and whether they propose reuniting their armies in order to cover Brussels and Liège, by trying their fortune in another battle. . . ."[1]

As Napoleon's fate was to depend largely on an intelligent carrying out of this order, we may point out that it consisted of two chief parts — the general aim and the means of carrying out that aim. The aim was to find out the direction of the Prussians' retreat, and to prevent them joining Wellington, whether for the defence of Brussels or of Liège. The means were an advance to Gembloux and scouting along the Namur and Maestricht roads. The chance that the allies might reunite for the defence of Brussels was alluded to, but no measures were prescribed as to scouting in that direction : these were left to Grouchy's discretion. It must be confessed

[1] Grouchy suppressed this despatch, but it was published in 1842.

that the order was far from clear. To name the towns of Brussels and Liège (which are sixty miles apart) was sufficiently distracting; and to suggest that only the eastern and south-eastern roads should be explored was certain to limit Grouchy's immediate attention to those roads alone. For he distrusted alike his own abilities and the power of the force placed at his disposal; and an officer thus situated is sure to inclose himself in the strict letter of his instructions. This was what he did, with disastrous results.

Grouchy had hitherto held no important command. As a cavalry general he had done brilliant service; but now he was launched on a duty that called for strategic insight. His force was scarcely equal to the work. True, it was strong for scouting, having nearly 6,000 light horse; but the 27,000 footmen of Vandamme's and Gérard's corps had been exhausted by the deadly strife in the villages and were expecting a day's rest. Their commanders also resented being placed under Grouchy. In fact, leaders and men disliked the task, and set about it in a questioning, grumbling way. The infantry did not start till about 3 o'clock and only reached Gembloux late that evening — nine miles in six hours! The cavalry, too, was so badly handled by Excelmans around Gembloux that Thielmann's corps slipped away northward. The rain fell in torrents, obscuring the view; but it seems strange that the direction of the Prussian retreat was not surmised until about nightfall.

Meanwhile, on the French left wing, Ney had been equally lax. He must have received Napoleon's order to occupy Quatre Bras, "if there was only a rearguard there," a little before 10 A.M.; but he took no steps beyond futile skirmishing, and apparently knew not that the British were slipping away.

About 2 P.M., when the British cavalry was ready to turn rein, the Duke and Sir H. Vivian saw the glint of cuirasses along the Sombref road. It was the vanguard of the Emperor's advance. Furious that his foes were escaping from his clutches, Napoleon had left his carriage and was pressing on with the foremost horsemen. To Ney he sent an imperative summons to advance, and when

that Marshal came up, greeted him with the words "You have ruined France." But it was time for deeds, not words: and he now put forth all his strength. At once he flung his powerful cavalry at the British rear; and even now it might have gone hard with Wellington had not the lowering clouds burst in a deluge of rain. Quickly the road was ploughed up; and the cornfields became impassable for the French horsemen.

While the pursuers struggled in the mire and aimed wildly through the pelting haze, the British rearguard raced for safety. Says Captain Mercer of the artillery: "We galloped for our lives through the storm, striving to gain the hamlets, Lord Uxbridge urging us on, crying 'Make haste; for God's sake gallop, or you will be taken.'"[1] Gaining on the pursuit, they reached Genappe, and, filing over its bridge and up the narrow street, prepared to check the French. At this time the Emperor galloped up, drenched to the skin, his gray overcoat streaming with rain, his hat bent out of all shape by the storm.[2] He was once more the artillery officer of Toulon. "Fire on them," he shouted to his gunners, "they are English." A sharp skirmish ensued, in which our 7th Hussars, charging down into the village, were worsted by the French lancers, "an arm," says Cotton, "with which we were quite unacquainted." In their retreat they were saved by the Life Guards, whose weight and strength carried all before them.

At last, on the ridge of Waterloo, Wellington's force turned at bay. Napoleon, coming up at 6.30 to the brow of the opposite slope, ordered a strong force to advance into the sodden clay of the valley. It was promptly torn by a heavy cannonade; and the truth was borne in on him that the British had escaped him for that day.

[1] Mercer, vol. i., p. 270.
[2] Pétiet, "Souvenirs militaires," p. 204.

NAPOLEON'S HEALTH IN THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN

As many writers assert that Napoleon at this time was but the shadow of his former self, we must briefly review the evidence of contemporaries on this subject; for if the assertion be true, the battle of Waterloo deserves little notice.

It seems that for some time past there had been a slight falling off in his mental and bodily powers; but when it began and how far it progressed is matter of doubt. Some observers, including Chaptal, date it from the hardships of the retreat from Moscow. This is very doubtful. He ended that campaign in a better state of health than he had enjoyed during the advance. Besides, in none of his wars did he show such vitality and fertility of resource as in the desperate struggle of 1814, which Wellington pronounced his masterpiece. After this there seems to have been a period of something like relapse at Elba. In September, 1814, Sir Neil Campbell reported: "Napoleon seems to have lost all habits of study and sedentary application. He occasionally falls into a state of inactivity never known before, and sometimes reposes in his bedroom of late for several hours in the day; takes exercise in a carriage and not on horseback. His health excellent and his spirits not at all depressed" ("F. O.," France, No. 114). During his ten months at Elba he became very stout and his cheeks puffy.

On his return to France he displayed his old activity; and the most credible witnesses assert that his faculties showed no marked decline. Guizot, who saw a good deal of him, writes: "I perceive in the intellect and conduct of Napoleon during the Hundred Days no sign of enfeebling: I find in his judgment and actions his accustomed qualities." In a passage quoted above (p. 413) Mollien notes that his master was a prey to lassitude after some hours of work, but he says nothing on the subject of disease; and in a man of forty-six, who had lived a hard life and a "fast" life, we should not expect to find the capacity for the sustained intellectual efforts of the Consulate. Méneval noticed nothing worse in his master's condition than a tendency to "réverie": he detected no disease. The statement of Pasquier that his genius and his physical powers were in a profound decline is a manifest exaggeration, uttered by a man who did not once see him before Waterloo, who was driven from Paris by him, and strove to discourage his supporters. Still less can we accept the following melodramatic description, by Thiébault, of Napoleon's appearance on Sunday, June 11th: "His look, once so formidable and piercing, had lost its strength and even its steadiness: his face had lost all expression and all its force: his mouth, compressed, had none of its former witchery: and his gait was as perplexed as his demeanour and gestures were undecided: the ordinary pallor of his skin was replaced by a strongly pronounced greenish tinge which struck me."

Let us follow this wreck of a man to the war and see what he accomplished. At dawn on June 12th he entered his landau and

drove to Laon, a distance of some seventy miles. On the next day he got through an immense amount of work, and proceeded to Beaumont. On the 15th of June he was up at dawn, mounted his horse, and remained on horseback, directing the operations against the Prussians, for nearly eighteen hours. This time was broken by one spell of rest. Near Charleroi, says Baudus, an officer of Soult's staff, he was overcome by sleep and heeded not the cheers of a passing column: at this Baudus was indignant, but most unjustly so. Napoleon needed these snatches of sleep as a relief to prolonged mental tension. At night he returned to Charleroi, "overcome with fatigue." On the next day he was still very weary, says Ségur; he did not exert himself until the battle of Ligny began at 2.30; but he then rode about till nightfall, through a time of terrible heat. Fatigue showed itself again early on the morrow, when he declined to see Grouchy before 8 A.M. Yet his review of the troops and his long discussions on Parisian politics were clearly due, not to torpor, but to the belief that he had sundered the allies, and could occupy Brussels at will; for when he found out his mistake, he showed all the old energy, riding with the vanguard from Quatre Bras to La Belle Alliance through the violent rain.

Whatever, then, were his ailments, they were not incompatible with great and sustained activity. What were those ailments? He is said to have suffered from intermittent affections of the lower bowel, of the bladder, and of the skin, the two last resulting in ischury (Dorsey Gardner's "Quatre Bras, Ligny, and Waterloo," pp. 31–37; O'Connor Morris, pp. 164–166, note). The list is formidable; but it contains its own refutation. A man suffering from these diseases, unless in their earliest and mildest stages, could not have done what Napoleon did. Ischury, if at all pronounced, is a bar to horse exercise. Doubtless his long rides aggravated any trouble that he had in this respect, for Pétiet, who was attached to the staff, noticed that he often dismounted and sat before a little table that was brought to him for the convenience of examining maps; but Pétiet thought this was due, not to ill health (about which he says nothing), but to his corpulence ("Souvenirs militaires," pp. 196 and 212). Prince Jerome and a surgeon of the imperial staff assured Thiers that Napoleon was suffering from a disease of the bladder; but this was contradicted by the valet, Marchand; and if he really was suffering from all, or any one, of the maladies named above, it is very strange that the surgeon allowed him to expose himself to the torrential rain of the night of the 17th–18th for a purpose which a few trusty officers could equally well have discharged (see next chapter). Furthermore, Baron Larrey, Chief Surgeon of the army, who saw Napoleon before the campaign began and during its course, *says not a word about the Emperor's health* ("Relation médicale des Campagnes, 1815–1840," pp. 5–11).

Again, the intervals of drowsiness on the 15th and 18th of June, on which the theory of physical collapse is largely based, may be explained far more simply. Napoleon had long formed the habit of working a good deal at night and of seeking repose during a busy day by brief snatches of slumber. The habit grew on him at Elba;

and this, together with his activity since daybreak, accounts for his sleeping near Charleroi. The same explanation probably holds good as to his occasional drowsiness at Waterloo. He scarcely closed his eyes before 3.30 A.M.; and he cannot have been physically fit for the unexpectedly long and severe strain of that Sunday. That he began the day well we know from a French soldier named Barral (grandfather of the author of "L'Epopée de Waterloo"), who looked at him carefully at 9.30 A.M., and wrote: "He seemed to me in very good health, extraordinarily active and preoccupied." Decoster, the peasant guide who was with Napoleon the whole day, afterwards told Sir W. Scott that he was calm and confident up to the crisis. Gourgaud, who clung to him during the flight to Paris and thence to Rochefort, notes nothing more serious than great fatigue; Captain Maitland, when he received him on board the "Bellerophon," thought him "a remarkably strong, well-built man." During the voyage to St. Helena he suffered from nothing worse than *mal de mer;* he ate meat in exceptional quantity, even in the tropics.

Very noteworthy, too, is Lavalette's narrative. When he saw Napoleon before his departure from Paris to the Belgian frontier, he found him suffering from depression and a pain in the chest; but he avers that, on the return from Waterloo, apart from one "frightful epileptic laugh," Napoleon speedily settled down to his ordinary behaviour: not a word is added as to his health. (Sir W. Scott, "Life of Napoleon," vol. viii., p. 496; Gourgaud, "Campagne de 1815," and "Journal de St. Hélène," vol. ii., Appendix 32; "Narrative of Captain Maitland," p. 208; Lavalette, "Mems.," ch. xxxiii.; Houssaye ridicules the stories of his ill-health.)

What is the upshot of it all? The evidence seems to show that, whatever was Napoleon's condition before the campaign, he was in his usual health amidst the stern joys of war. And this is consonant with his previous experience: he throve on events which wore ordinary beings to the bone: the one thing that he could not endure was the worry of parliamentary opposition, which aroused a nervous irritation not to be controlled and concealed without infinite effort. During the campaign we find very few trustworthy proofs of his decline and much that points to energy of resolve and great rallying power after exertion. If he was suffering from three illnesses, they were assuredly of a highly intermittent nature.

CHAPTER XL

WATERLOO

WOULD Wellington hold on to his position? This was the thought that troubled the Emperor on the night after the wild chase from Quatre Bras. Before retiring to rest at the Caillou farm, he went to the front with Bertrand and a young officer, Gudin by name, and peered at the enemy's fires dimly seen through the driving sheets of rain. Satisfied that the allies were there, he returned to the farm, dictated a few letters on odious parliamentary topics, and then sought a brief repose. But the same question drove sleep from his eyes. At one o'clock he was up again and with the faithful Bertrand plashed to the front through long rows of drenched recumbent forms. Once more they strained their ears to catch through the hiss of the rain some sound of a muffled retirement. Strange thuds came now and again from the depths of the wood of Hougoumont: all else was still. At last, over the slope on the north-east crowned by the St. Lambert Wood there stole the first glimmer of gray; little by little the murky void bodied forth dim shapes, and the watch-fires burnt pale against the orient gleams. It was enough. He turned back to the farm. Wellington could scarcely escape him now.

While the Emperor was making the round of his outposts, a somewhat cryptic despatch from Grouchy reached headquarters. The Marshal reported from Gembloux, at 10 P.M. of the 17th, that part of the Prussians had retired towards Wavre, seemingly with a view to joining Wellington; that their centre, led by Blücher, had fallen back on Perwez in the direction of Liège; while a column with artillery had made for Namur; if he found the enemy's chief force to be on the Liège *chaussée*, he would pursue them along that road; if towards Wavre, he

would follow them thither "in order that they may not gain Brussels, and so as to separate them from Wellington." This last phrase ought surely to have convinced Napoleon that Grouchy had not fully understood his instructions; for to march on Wavre would not stop the Prussians joining Wellington, if they were in force.[1]

Moreover, Napoleon now knew, what Grouchy did not know, that the Prussians were in force at Wavre. It seems strange that the Emperor did not send this important news to his Marshal; but perhaps we may explain this by his absence at the outposts. As it was, no clear statement of the facts of the case was sent off to Grouchy *until* 10 A.M. *of the* 18*th*. He then informed his Marshal that, according to all the reports, three bodies of Prussians had made for Wavre. Grouchy "must therefore move thither — in order to approach us, to put yourself within the sphere of our operations, and to keep up your communications with us, pushing before you those bodies of Prussians which have taken this direction and which may have stopped at Wavre, where you ought to arrive as soon as possible." Grouchy, however, was not to neglect Blücher's troops that were on his right, but must pick up their stragglers and keep up his communications with Napoleon.

Such was the letter; and again we must pronounce it far from clear. Grouchy was not bidden to throw all his efforts on the side of Wavre; and he was not told whether he must attack the enemy at that town, or interpose a wedge between them and Wellington, or support Napoleon's right. Now Napoleon would certainly have prescribed an immediate concentration of Grouchy's force towards the north-west for one of the last two objects, had he believed Blücher about to attempt a flank march against the chief French army. Obviously it had not yet entered his thoughts that so daring a step would be taken by a foe whom he pictured as scattered and demoralized by defeat.[2]

[1] Ropes, pp. 212, 246, 359. I follow the "received" version of this despatch. For a comparison of it with the "Grouchy" version see Horsburgh, p. 155, note.

[2] Ropes, pp. 266, 288; Houssaye, p. 316, with a good note.

As we have seen, the Prussians were not demoralized; they had not gone off in three directions; and Blücher was not making for Liège. He was at Wavre and was planning a master-stroke. At midnight, he had sent to Wellington, through Müffling, a written promise that at dawn he would set the corps of Bülow in motion against Napoleon's right; that of Pirch I. was to follow; while the other two corps would also be ready to set out. Wellington received this despatch about 3 A.M. of the 18th, and thereupon definitely resolved to offer battle. A similar message was sent off from Wavre at 9.30 A.M., but with a postscript, in which we may discern Gneisenau's distrust of Wellington, begging Müffling to find out accurately whether the Duke really had determined to fight at Waterloo. Meanwhile Bülow's corps had begun its march from the south-east of Wavre, but with extreme slowness, which was due to a fire at Wavre, to the crowded state of the narrow road, and also to the misgivings of Gneisenau. It certainly was not owing to fear of Grouchy; for at that time the Prussian leaders believed that only 15,000 French were on their track. Not until midday, when the cannonade on the west grew to a roar, did Gneisenau decide to send forward Ziethen's corps towards Ohain, on Wellington's left; but thereafter the defence of the Dyle against Grouchy was left solely to Thielmann's corps.[1]

While this storm was brewing in the east, everything in front of the Emperor seemed to portend a prosperous day. High as he rated Wellington's numbers, he had no doubt as to the result. "The enemy's army," he remarked just after breakfast, "outnumbers ours by more than a fourth; nevertheless we have ninety chances out of a hundred in our favour." Ney, who then chanced to come in, quickly remarked: "No doubt, sire, if Wellington

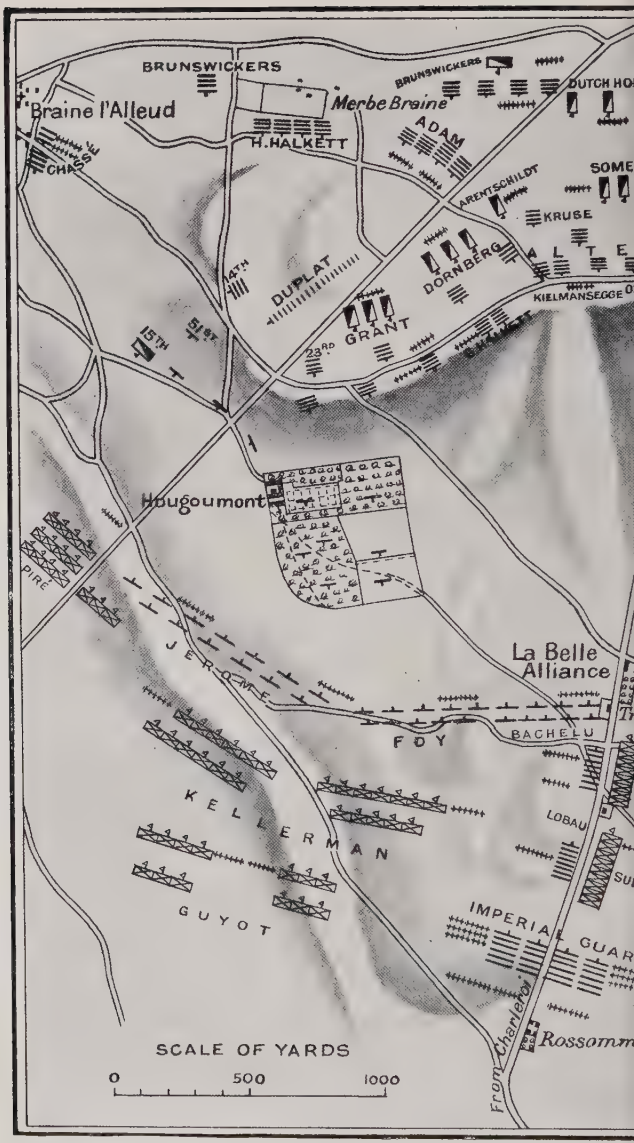
[1] Ollech, pp. 187–192; Delbrück's "Gneisenau," vol. ii., p. 205. I cannot credit the story told by Hardinge in 1837 to Earl Stanhope ("Conversations," p. 110), that, on the night of the 16th June, Gneisenau sought to dissuade Blücher from joining Wellington. Hardinge only had the story at second hand, and wrongly assigns it to Wavre. On the afternoon of the 17th Gneisenau ordered Ziethen *to keep open communications with Wellington* (Ollech, p. 170). The story that Wellington rode over to Wavre on the night of the 18th on his horse "Copenhagen" is of course a myth.

were simple enough to wait for you ; but I come to inform you that he is retreating." "You have seen wrong," was the retort, "the time is gone for that." Soult did not share his master's assurance of victory, and once more begged him to recall some of Grouchy's force; to which there came the brutal reply: "Because you have been beaten by Wellington you think him a great general. And I tell you that Wellington is a bad general, that the English are bad troops, and that this will be the affair of a *déjeuner*." "I hope it may," said Soult. Reille afterwards came in, and, finding how confident the Emperor was, mentioned the matter to D'Erlon, who advised his colleague to return and caution him. "What is the use," rejoined Reille ; "he would not listen to us."

In truth, Napoleon was in no mood to receive advice. He admitted on the voyage to St. Helena that "he had not exactly reconnoitred Wellington's position."[1] And, indeed, there seemed to be nothing much to reconnoitre. The Mont St. Jean, or Waterloo, position does not impress the beholder with any sense of strength. The so-called valley, separating the two arrays, is a very shallow depression, nowhere more than fifty feet below the top of the northern slope. It is divided about half-way across by an undulation that affords good cover to assailants about to attack La Haye Sainte. Another slight rise crosses the vale half-way between this farm and Hougoumont, and facilitates the approach to that part of the ridge. In fact, only on their extreme left could the defenders feel much security; for there the slope is steeper, besides being protected in front by marshy ground, copses, and the hamlets of Papelotte, La Haye, and Smohain.

Napoleon paid little attention to the left wing of the allies. The centre and right centre were evidently Wellington's weak points, and there, especially near the transverse rise, our leader chiefly massed his troops. Yet there, too, the defence had some advantages. The front of the centre was protected by La Haye Sainte, "a strong stone and brick building," says Cotton, "with a

[1] "Blackwood's Magazine," October, 1896; "Cornhill," January, 1901.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23RD
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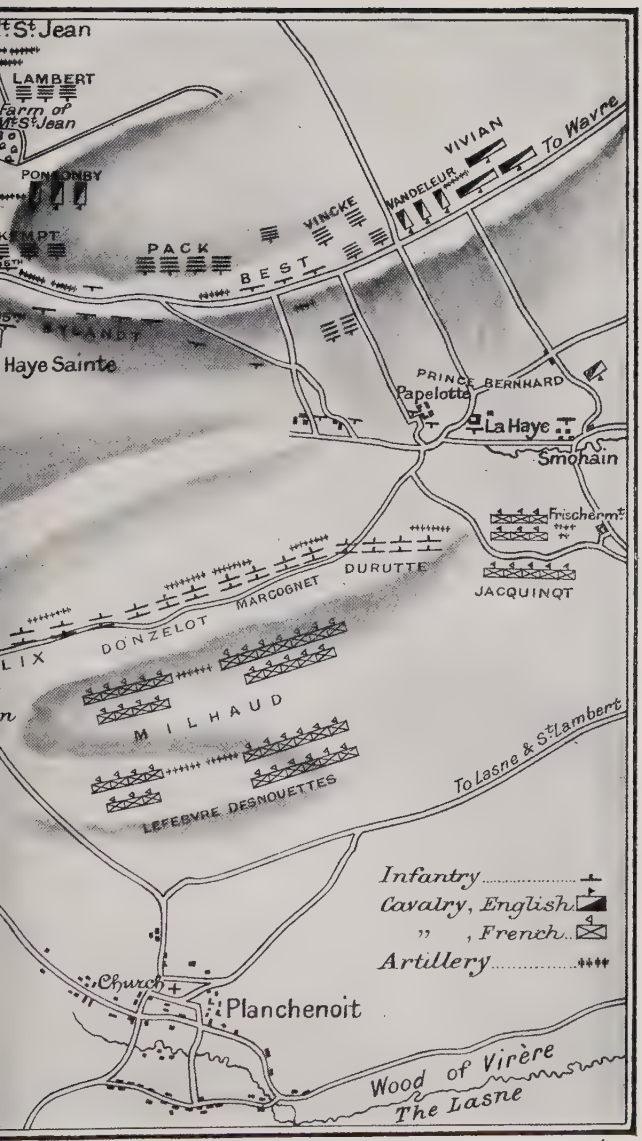


O'CLOCK A.M.

Stanford's Geog.l Estab.t

narrow orchard in front and a small garden in the rear, both of which were hedged around, except on the east side of the garden, where there was a strong wall running along the high-road." It is generally admitted that Wellington gave too little attention to this farm, which Napoleon saw to be the key of the allied position. Loop-holes were made in its south and east walls, but none in the western wall, and half of the barn-door opening on the fields had been torn off for firewood by soldiers over-night. The place was held at first by 376 men of the King's German Legion, who threw up a barricade at the barn-door, as also on the high-road outside the orchard; but, as the sappers and carpenters were removed to Hougoumont, little could be done.

Far stronger was the château of Hougoumont, which had been built with a view to defence. The outbuildings were now loopholed, and scaffolds were erected to enable our men to fire over the garden walls which commanded the orchard. The defence was intrusted to the light companies of the second battalions of Coldstreams and Foot Guards (now the Grenadier Guards); while the wood in front was held by Nassauers and Hanoverians. Chassé's Dutch-Belgians were posted at the village of Braine la Leud to give further security to Wellington's right.[1] Napoleon's intention was to pierce the allied centre behind La Haye Sainte, where their lines were thin. But he did not know that behind the crest ran a sunken cross-road, which afforded excellent cover, and that the ground, sloping away towards Wellington's rear, screened his second line and reserves.

It was this peculiarity of the ground, so different from that of the exposed slope behind Ligny, that helped the great master of defensive tactics secretly to meet and promptly to foil every onset of his mighty antagonist.

[1] Beamish's "King's German Legion," vol. ii., p. 352. Sir Hussey Vivian asserts that the allied position was by no means strong; but General Kennedy, in his "Notes on Waterloo" (p. 68), pronounces it "good and well occupied." A year previously Wellington noted it as a good position. Sir Hudson Lowe then suggested that it should be fortified: "Query, in respect to the construction of a work at Mt. Jean, being the commanding point at the junction of two principal chaussées" ("Unpublished Memoirs").

While under-estimating the strength of Wellington's position Napoleon over-rated his numbers. As we have seen, he remarked that the allies exceeded the French by more than a fourth. Now, as his own numbers were fully 74,000, he credited the allies with upwards of 92,000. In reality, they were not more than 67,000, as Wellington had left 17,000 at Hal; but if this powerful detachment had been included, Napoleon's estimate would not have been far wrong. At St. Helena he gave out that his despatch of cavalry towards Hal had induced Wellington to weaken his army to this extent; but Houssaye has shown that the statement is an entire fabrication. The Emperor certainly believed that all Wellington's troops were close at hand.[1]

The Duke, on his side, would doubtless have retreated had he known that the Prussian advance would be as slow as it was. His composite forces, in which five languages were spoken, were unfit for a long contest with Napoleon's army. The Dutch-Belgian troops, numbering 17,000, were known to be half-hearted; the 2,800 Nassauers, who had served under Soult in 1813, were not above suspicion; the 11,000 Hanoverians and 5,900 Brunswickers were certain to do their best, but they were mostly raw troops. In fact, Wellington could thoroughly rely only on his 23,990 British troops and the 5,800 men of the King's German Legion; and among our men there was a large proportion of recruits or drafts from militia battalions. Events were to prove that this motley gathering could hold its own while at rest; but during the subsequent march to Paris Wellington passed the scathing judgment that, with the exception of his Peninsular men, it was "the worst equipped army, with the worst staff,

[1] Wellington has been censured by Clausewitz, Kennedy, and Chesney for leaving so large a force at Hal. Perhaps he desired to protect the King of France at Ghent, though he was surely relieved of responsibility by his despatch of June 18th, 3 A.M., begging the Duc de Berri to retire with the King to Antwerp. It seems to me more likely that he was so confident of an early advance of the Prussians (see his other despatch of the same hour and Sir A. Frazer's statement — "Letters," p. 553 — "We expected the Prussian co-operation early in the day") as to assume that Napoleon would stake all on an effort against his right; and in that case the Hal force would have crushed the French rear, though it was very far off.

HOUGOUMONT AS SEEN FROM THE ENGLISH RIGHT.

LA HAYE SAINTE—LOOKING ACROSS THE FRENCH POSITION TOWARDS PLANCHENOIT.

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO.

From aquatints after drawings by Captain Jones made shortly after the battle.

ever brought together."[1] This was after he had lost De Lancey, Picton, Ponsonby, and many other able officers; but on the morning of the 18th there was no lack of skill in the placing of the troops, witness General Kennedy's arrangement of Alten's division so that it might readily fall into the "chequer" pattern, which proved so effective against the French horsemen.

Napoleon's confidence seemed to be well founded: he had 246 cannon against the allies' 156, and his preponderance in cavalry of the line was equally great. Above all, there were the 13,000 footmen of the Imperial Guard, flanked by 3,000 cavaliers. The effective strength of the two armies has been reckoned by Kennedy as in the proportion of four to seven. Why, then, did he not attack at once? There were two good reasons: first that his men had scattered widely overnight in search of food and shelter, and now assembled very slowly on the plateau; second, that the rain did not abate until 8 A.M., and even then slight drizzles came on, leaving the ground totally unfit for the movements of horse and artillery. Leaving the troops time to form and the ground to improve, the Emperor consulted his charts and took a brief snatch of sleep. He then rode to the front; and, as the gray-coated figure passed along those imposing lines, the enthusiasm found vent in one rolling roar of "Vive l'Empereur," which was wafted threateningly to the thinner array of the allies. There the leader received no whole-hearted acclaim save from the men who knew him; but among these there was no misgiving. "If," wrote Major Simmons of the 95th, "you could have seen the proud and fierce appearance of the British at that tremendous moment, there was not one eye but gleamed with joy."[2]

[1] Wellington to Earl Bathurst, June 25th, 1815. The Earl of Ellesmere, who wrote under the Duke's influence, stated that not more than 7,000 of the British troops had seen a shot fired. This is incorrect. Picton's division, still 5,000 strong, had all served in Spain except the 32nd; and Lambert's brigade counted 2,200 veterans; many of the Guards had seen fire, and the 52nd was a seasoned regiment. Tomkinson (p. 296) reckons all the 5,220 British and 1,730 King's German troopers as "efficient," and Wellington himself, so Mercer affirms, told Blücher he had 6,000 of the finest cavalry in the world.

[2] "A British Rifleman," p. 367.

The first shots were fired at 11.50 to cover the assault on the wood of Hougoumont by Prince Jerome Bonaparte's division of Reille's corps. The Nassauers and Hanoverians briskly replied, and Cleeve's German battery opened fire with such effect that the leading column fell back. Again the assailants came on in greater force under shelter of a tremendous cannonade: this time they gained a lodgment, and step by step drove the defenders back through the copse. Though checked for a time by the Guards, they mastered the wood south of the house by about one o'clock. There they should have stopped. Napoleon's orders were for them to gain a hold only on the wood and throw out a good line of skirmishers: all that he wanted on this side was to prevent any turning movement from Wellington's advanced outposts. Reille also sent orders not to attack the château; but the Prince and his men rushed on at those massive walls, only to meet with a bloody repulse. A second attack fared no better; and though some 12,000 of Reille's men finally attacked the mansion on three sides, yet our Guards, when reinforced, beat off every onset of wellnigh ten times their numbers.

For some time the Emperor paid little heed to this waste of energy; at 2 P.M. he recalled Jerome to his side. He now saw the need of husbanding his resources; for a disaster had overtaken the French right centre. He had fixed one o'clock for a great attack on La Haye Sainte by D'Erlon's corps of nearly 20,000 men. But a delay occurred owing to a cause that we must now describe.

Before his great battery of eighty guns belched forth at the centre and blotted out the view, he swept the horizon with his glass, and discerned on the skirts of the St. Lambert Wood, six miles away, a dark object. Was it a spinney, or a body of troops? His staff officers could not agree; but his experienced eye detected a military formation. Thereupon some of the staff asserted that they must be Blücher's men, others that they were Grouchy's. Here he could scarcely be in a doubt. Not long after 10 A.M. he received from Grouchy a despatch, dated from Gembloux at 3 A.M., reporting that the Prussians were retiring in force on Brussels to concentrate or to join Wellington,

and that he (Grouchy) was on the point of starting for Sart-à-Walhain and Wavre. He said nothing as to preventing any flank march that the enemy might make from Wavre with a view to joining their allies straightway. Therefore he was not to be looked for on this side of Wavre, and those troops must consequently be Prussians.[1]

All doubts were removed when a Prussian hussar officer, captured by Marbot's vedettes near Lasne, was brought to Napoleon. He bore a letter from Bülow to Müffling, stating that the former was on the march to attack the French right wing. In reply to Napoleon's questions the captain stated that Bülow's whole corps was in motion, but wisely said nothing about the other two corps that were following. Such as it was, the news in no way alarmed the Emperor. As Bülow was about to march against the French flank, Grouchy must march on his flank and take his corps *en flagrant délit*. That is the purport of the postscript added to a rather belated reply that was about to be sent off to Grouchy at 1 P.M. It did not reach him till 5 P.M., too late to influence the result, even had he desisted from his attack on Wavre, which he did not.[2]

We return to the Emperor's actions at half-past one. Domont's and Subervie's light horsemen were sent out towards Frischermont to observe the Prussians; the great battery of eighty guns, placed on the intermediate rise, now opened fire; and under cover of its deadly blasts D'Erlon's four divisions dipped down into the valley. They were ranged in closely packed battalions spread out in a front of some two hundred men, a formation that Napoleon had not suggested, but did not countermand. The

[1] I distrust the story told by Zenowicz, and given by Thiers, that Napoleon at 10 A.M. was awaiting Grouchy with impatience; also Marbot's letter referred to in his "Memoirs," *ad fin.*, in which he says the Emperor bade him push on boldly towards Wavre, as the troops near St. Lambert "could be nothing else than the corps of Grouchy." Grouchy's despatch and the official reply show that Napoleon knew Grouchy to be somewhere between Gembloux and Wavre. Besides, Bülow's report (Ollech, p. 192) states that, while at St. Lambert, he sent out two strong patrols to the S.W., and was not observed by the French, "who appeared to have no idea of our existence." This completely disposes of Marbot's story.

[2] Houssaye, ch. vii. In the "Eng. Hist. Rev." for October, 1900, p. 815, Mr. H. George gives a proof of this, citing the time it took him to pace the roads by which Grouchy might have advanced.

left column, that of Alix, was supported by cavalry on its flank. Part of this division gained the orchard of La Haye Sainte, and attacked the farm buildings on all sides. From his position hard by a great elm above the farm, Wellington had marked this onset, and now sent down a Hanoverian battalion to succour their compatriots ; but in the cutting of the main road it was charged and routed by Milhaud's cuirassiers, who pursued them up the slope until the rally sounded. Farther to the east, the French seemed still surer of victory. Bylandt's Dutch-Belgians, some 3,000 strong, after suffering heavily in their cruelly exposed position, wavered at the approach of Donzelot's column, and finally broke into utter rout, pelted in their flight with undeserved gibes from the British in their rear. These consisted of Picton's division, the heroes of Quatre Bras. Here they had as yet sustained little loss, thanks to the shelter of the hollow cross-road and a hedge.

The French columns now topped the ridge, uttering shouts of triumph, and began to deploy into line for the final charge. This was the time, as Picton well knew, to pour in a volley and dash on with the cold steel ; but as he cheered on his men, a bullet struck him in the temple and cut short his brilliant career. His tactics were successful at some points, while at others our thin lines barely held up against the masses. Certainly no decisive result could have been gained but for the timely onset of Ponsonby's Union Brigade — the 1st Royal Dragoons, the Scots Greys, and the Inniskillings.

At the time when Lord Uxbridge gave the order, "Royals and Inniskillings charge, the Greys support," Alix's division was passing the cross-road. But as the Royals dashed in, "the head of the column was seized with a panic, gave us a fire which brought down about twenty men, then went instantly about and endeavoured to regain the opposite side of the hedges ; but we were upon and amongst them, and had nothing to do but press them down the slope." So wrote Captain Clark Kennedy, who sabred the French colour-bearer and captured the eagle. Equally brilliant was the charge of the Inniskillings, in the centre of the brigade. They rode down Donzelot's division, jostled its ranks into a helpless mass,

and captured a great number of prisoners. The Scots Greys, too, succouring the hard-pressed Gordons, fell fiercely on Marcognet's division. "Both regiments," wrote Major Winchester of the 92nd, "charged together calling out 'Scotland for ever'; the Scots Greys actually walked over this column, and in less than three minutes it was totally destroyed. The grass field, which was only an instant before as green and smooth as Phœnix Park, was covered with killed and wounded, knapsacks, arms, and accoutrements."[1]

Meanwhile, on the left of the brigade, Vandeleur's horse and some Dutch-Belgian dragoons drove back Durutte's men past Papelotte. On its right, the 2nd Life Guards cut up the cuirassiers while disordered by the sudden dip of the hollow cross-road; and further to the west, the 1st Dragoon Guards and 1st Life Guards met them at the edge of the plateau, clashed furiously, burst through them, and joined in the wild charge of Ponsonby's brigade up the opposite slope, cutting the traces of forty French cannon and sabring the gunners.

But Napoleon was awaiting the moment for revenge, and now sent forward a solid force of lancers and dragoons, who fell on our disordered bands with resistless force, stabbing the men and overthrowing their wearied steeds. Here fell the gallant Ponsonby with hundreds of his men, and, had not Vandeleur's horse checked the pursuit, very few could have escaped. Still, this brigade had saved the day. Two of D'Erlon's columns had gained a hold on the ridge, until the sudden charge of our horsemen turned victory into a disastrous rout that cost the French upwards of 5,000 men.

As if exhausted by this eager strife, both armies relaxed their efforts for a space and re-formed their lines. Wellington ordered Lambert's brigade of 2,200 Peninsular veterans, who had only arrived that morning, to fill the gaps on his left. The Emperor, too, was uneasy, as he showed by taking copious pinches of snuff. He mounted his horse and rode to the front, receiving there the cheers

[1] "Waterloo Letters," pp. 60–63, 70–77, 81–84, 383. The whole brigade was hardly 1,000 sabres strong. Sir E. Wood, pp. 126–146; Siborne, vol. ii., pp. 20–45.

of his blood-stained lancers and battered infantry. Having received another despatch from Grouchy which gave no hope of his speedy arrival, he ordered his cannon once more to waste the British lines and bombard Hougoumont, while Ney led two of D'Erlon's brigades that were the least shaken to resume the attack on La Haye Sainte. Once more they were foiled at the farm buildings by the hardy Germans, to whom Wellington had sent a timely reinforcement.[1] At Hougoumont also the Guards held firm, despite the fierce conflagration in the barn and part of the chapel. But while his best troops everywhere stood their ground, the Duke saw with concern the gaps in his fighting line. Many of the Dutch-Belgians had made off to the rear ; and Jackson, when carrying an order to a reserve Dutch battery to advance — an order that was disobeyed — saw what had become of these malingerers. "I peeped into the skirts of the forest and truly felt astonished : entire companies seemed there with regularly piled arms, fires blazing under cooking kettles, while the men lay about smoking!"[2]

Far different was the scene at the front. There the third act of the drama was beginning. After half an hour of the heaviest cannonade ever known, Wellington's faithful troops were threatened by an avalanche of cavalry, and promptly fell into the "chequer" disposition previously arranged for the most exposed division, that of Alten. Napoleon certainly hoped either to crush Wellington outright by a mighty onset of horse, or to strip him bare for the *coup de grâce*. At the Caillou farm in the morning he said : "I will use my powerful artillery ; my cavalry shall charge ; and I will advance with my Old Guard." The use of cavalry on a grand scale was no new thing in his wars. By it he had won notable advantages, above all at Dresden ; and he believed that footmen, when badly shaken by artillery, could not stand before his squadrons. The French cavalry, 15,000 strong at the outset, had as yet suffered little, and the way had been

[1] Houssaye, pp. 354, 499, admits the repulse.

[2] B. Jackson, p. 34. Müffling says the defaulters numbered 10,000! While sympathizing with the efforts of Dutch-Belgian writers on behalf of their kin, I must accept Jackson's evidence as conclusive here. It is true these troops had been mauled at Quatre Bras and early at Waterloo.

partly cleared by the last assaults on Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte, where the defenders were wholly occupied in self-defence.

But Ney certainly pressed the first charge too soon. Doubtless he was misled by the retirement of our first line a little way behind the crest to gain some slight shelter from the iron storm. Looking on this prudent move as a sign of retreat he led forward the cuirassiers of Milhaud; and as these splendid brigades trotted forward, the *chasseurs à cheval* of the Guard and "red" lancers joined them. More than 5,000 strong, these horsemen rode into the valley, formed at the foot of the slope, and then, under cover of their artillery, began to breast the slope. At its crest the guns of the allies opened on them point-blank; but, despite their horrible losses, they swept on, charged through the guns and down the reverse slope towards the squares. Volley after volley now tore through with fearful effect, and the survivors swerved to the intervals. Their second and third lines fared little better; astonished at so stout a stand, where they looked to find only a few last despairing efforts, they fell into faltering groups.

"As to the so-called charges," says Basil Jackson, "I do not think that on a single occasion actual collision occurred. I many times saw the cuirassiers come on with boldness to within some twenty or thirty yards of a square, when, seeing the steady firmness of our men, they invariably edged away and retired. Sometimes they would halt and gaze at the triple row of bayonets, when two or three brave officers would advance and strive to urge the attack, raising their helmets aloft on their sabres — but all in vain, as no efforts could make the men close with the terrible bayonets, and meet certain destruction."[1]

After the fire of the rear squares had done its work, our cavalry fell on the wavering masses; and, as they rode off, the gunners ran forth from the squares and plied them with shot. In a few minutes the mounted host that seemed to have swallowed up the footmen was gone, the red and blue chequers stood forth triumphant, and the guns that should have been spiked dealt forth

[1] B. Jackson, p. 35; "Waterloo Letters," pp. 129–144, 296; Cotton, p. 79.

death. Down below, the confused mass shaped itself for a new charge while its supports routed our horsemen.

In this second attack Ney received a powerful reinforcement. The Emperor ordered the advance of Kellermann and of Guyot with the heavy cavalry of the Guard, thus raising the number of horsemen to about 10,000. At the head of these imposing masses Ney again mounted the slope. But Wellington had strengthened his line by fresh troops, ordering up also Mercer's battery of six 9-pounders, to support two Brunswick regiments that wavered ominously as the French cannon-balls tore through them. Would these bewildered lads stand before the wave of horsemen already topping the crest? It seemed impossible. But just then Mercer's men thundered up between them with the guns, took post behind the raised cross-road, and opened on the galloping horsemen with case-shot. At once the front was strewn with steeds and men; and gunners and infantry riddled the successive ranks, that rushed on only to pile up writhing heaps and bar retreat to the survivors in front. Some of these sought safety by a dash through the guns, while the greater number struggled and even laid about with their sabres to hew their way out of this *battue*.

Elsewhere the British artillery was too exposed to be defended, and the gunners again fled back to the squares. Once more the cavalry surrounded our footmen, like "heavy surf breaking on a coast beset with isolated rocks, against which the mountainous wave dashes with furious uproar, breaks, divides, and runs hissing and boiling far beyond." Yet, as before, it failed to break those stubborn blocks, and a perplexing pause occurred, varied by partial and spasmodic rushes. "Will those English never show us their backs" — exclaimed the Emperor, as he strained his eyes to catch the first sign of rout. "I fear," replied Soult, "they will be cut to pieces first." For the present, it was the cavalry that gave way. Foiled by that indomitable infantry, they were again charged by British and German hussars and driven into the valley.

Once more Ney led on his riders, gathering up all his reserves. But the Duke had now brought up Adam's brigade and Duplat's King's Germans to the space behind

Hougoumont; their fire took the horsemen in flank: the blasts of grape and canister were as deadly as before: one and all, the squares held firm, beating back onset after onset: and by 6 o'clock the French cavalry fell away utterly exhausted.[1]

Who is to be held responsible for these wasteful attacks, and why was not French infantry at hand to hold the ground which the cavaliers seemed to have won? Undoubtedly, Ney began the first attack somewhat too early; but Napoleon himself strengthened the second great charge by the addition of Kellermann's and Guyot's brigades, doubtless in the belief that the British, of whose tenacity he had never had direct personal proof, must give way before so mighty a mass. Moreover, time after time it seemed that the attacks were triumphant; the allied guns on the right centre, except Mercer's, were nine or ten times taken, their front squares as often enveloped; and more than once the cry of victory was raised by the Emperor's staff.

Why, then, was not the attack clinched by infantry? To understand this we must review the general situation. Hougoumont still defied the attacks of nearly the whole of Reille's corps, and the effective part of D'Erlon's corps was hotly engaged at and near La Haye Sainte. Above all, the advent of the Prussians on the French right now made itself felt. After ceaseless toil, in which the soldiers were cheered on by Blücher in person, their artillery was got across the valley of the Lasne; and at 4.30 Bülow's vanguard debouched from the wood behind Frischermont. Lobau's corps of 7,800 men, which, according to Janin, was about to support Ney, now swung round to the right to check this advance.[2] Towards 5 o'clock the Prussian cannon opened fire on the horsemen of Domont and Subervie, who soon fell back on Lobau.

Bülow pressed on with his 30,000 men, and, swinging forward his left wing, gained a footing in the village of

[1] Houssaye, pp. 365, 371–376; Kennedy, pp. 117–120; Mercer, vol. i., pp. 311–324.

[2] Gourgaud (ch. vi.) states that the time of Lobau's move was 4.30, though he had reconnoitred on his right earlier. Napoleon's statements on this head at St. Helena are conflicting. One says that Lobau moved at 1.30, another at 4.30. Perhaps Janin's statement explains why Lobau did nothing definite till the later hour.

Planchenoit, while Lobau fell back towards La Belle Alliance. This took place between 5.30 and 6 o'clock, and accounts for Napoleon's lack of attention to the great cavalry charges. To break the British squares was highly desirable; but to ward off the Prussians from his rear was an imperative necessity. He therefore ordered Duhesme with the 4,000 footmen of the Young Guard to regain Planchenoit. Gallantly they advanced at the charge, and drove their weary and half-famished opponents out into the open.

Satisfied with this advantage, the Emperor turned his thoughts to the British and bade Ney capture La Haye Sainte at all costs. Never was duty more welcome. Mistakes and failures could now be atoned by triumph or a soldier's death. Both had as yet eluded his search. Three horses had been struck to the ground under him, but, dauntless as ever, he led Donzelot's men, with engineers, against the farm. Begrimed with smoke, hoarse with shouting, he breathed the lust of battle into those half-despondent ranks; and this time he succeeded. For five hours the brave Germans had held out, beating off rush after rush, until now they had but three or four bullets apiece left. The ordinary British ammunition did not fit their rifles; and their own reserve supply could not be found at the rear. Still, even when firing ceased, bayonet-thrusts and missiles kept off the assailants for a space, even from the half-destroyed barn-door, until Frenchmen mounted the roof of the stables and burst through the chief gateway: then Baring and his brave fellows fled through the house to the garden. "No pardon to these green devils" was now the cry, and those who could not make off to the ridge were bayoneted to a man.[1]

This was a grave misfortune for the allies. French sharpshooters now lined the walls of the farm and pushed up the ridge, pressing our front very hard, so

[1] Baring's account ("King's German Legion," App. xxi.) shows that the farm was taken about the time of the last great cavalry charge. Kennedy (p. 122) and Ompteda (*ad fin.*) are equally explicit; and the evidence of the French archives adduced by Houssaye (p. 378) places the matter beyond doubt.

LA HAYE SAINTE (CENTRE OF THE ENGLISH POSITION).

THE CHARLEROI ROAD CROSSING THE BATTLEFIELD.

LA BELLE ALLIANCE (CENTRE OF THE FRENCH POSITION).

ENGLISH BAGGAGE ON THE WAY TO PARIS AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH POSITIONS AT WATERLOO.

From aquatints after drawings by Captain Jones.

that, for a time, the space behind La Haye Sainte was practically bare of defenders. This was the news that Kennedy took to Wellington. He received it with the calm that bespoke a mighty soul; for, as Sir A. Frazer observed, however indifferent or apparently careless he might appear at the beginning of battles, as the crisis came he rose superior to all that could be imagined. Such was his demeanour now. Riding to the Brunswickers posted in reserve, he led them to the post of danger; Kennedy rallied the wrecks of Alten's division and brought up Germans from the left wing; the cavalry of Vandeleur and Vivian, moving in from the extreme left, also helped to steady the centre; and the approach of Chassé's Dutch-Belgian brigade, lately called in from Braine-la-Leud, strengthened our supports.

Had Napoleon promptly launched his Old and Middle Guard at Wellington's centre, victory might still have crowned the French eagles. But to Ney's request for more troops he returned the petulant answer: "Troops? where do you want me to get them from? Am I to make them?" At this time the Prussians were again masters of Planchenoit. Once more, then, he turned on them, and sent in two battalions, one of the Old, the other of the Middle Guard. In a single rush with the bayonet these veterans mastered the place and drove Bülow's men a quarter of a mile beyond, while Lobau regained ground further north. But the head of Pirch's corps was near at hand to strengthen Bülow; while, after long delays caused by miry lanes and an order from Blücher to make for Planchenoit, Ziethen's corps began to menace the French right at Smohain. Reiche soon opened fire with sixteen cannon, somewhat relieving the pressure on Wellington's left.[1]

Still the Emperor was full of hope. He did not know of the approach of Pirch and Ziethen. Now and again the muttering of Grouchy's guns was heard on the east, and despite that Marshal's last despatch, Napoleon still believed that he would come up and catch the Prussians. Satisfied, then, with holding off Bülow for a while, he

[1] Ollech, pp. 243–246. Reiche's exorbitant claims (vol. ii., pp. 209–215) are refuted by "Waterloo Letters," p. 22.

staked all on a last effort with the Old and Middle Guard. Leaving two battalions of these in Planchenoit, and three near Rossomme as a last reserve, he led forward nine battalions formed in hollow squares. A thrill ran through the line regiments, some of whom were falling back, as they saw the bearskins move forward ; and, to revive their spirits, the Emperor sent on Labédoyère with the news that Grouchy was at hand.

Thus the tension of hope long deferred, which renders Waterloo unique among battles, rose to its climax. Each side had striven furiously for eight hours in the belief that the Prussians, or Grouchy, must come ; and now, at the last agony, came the assurance that final triumph was at hand. The troops of D'Erlon and Reille once more clutched at victory on the crest behind La Haye Sainte or beneath the walls of Hougoumont, while the squares of the Guard struck obliquely across the vale in the track of the great cavalry charges. On the rise south-west of La Haye Sainte, Napoleon halted one battalion and handed over to Ney the command of the remaining eight, that hailed him as they passed with enthusiastic shouts. Two aides-de-camp just then galloped up from the right to tell him of the Prussian advance, but he refused to listen to them and bent his eyes on the Guards.[1]

Under cover of a whirlwind of shot the veterans pressed on. Having suffered very little at Ligny, they numbered fully 4,000, and formed at first one column, some seventy men in width. The front battalions headed for a point a little to the west of the present Belgian monument, while for some unexplained reason the rear portion diverged to the left and breasted the slope later than the others and nearer Hougoumont. Flanked by light guns that opened a brisk fire, and most gallantly supported by Donzelot's division close on their right, the leading column struggled on, despite the grape and canister which poured from the batteries of Bolton and Bean, making it wave "like corn blown by the wind." Friant, the Commander of the Old Guard, was severely wounded ; Ney's horse fell under him, but the gallant fighter rose undaunted, and waved on

[1] Lacoste (Decoster), Napoleon's Flemish guide, told this to Sir W. Scott, "Life of Napoleon," vol. viii., p. 496.

his men anew. And now they streamed over the ridge and through the British guns in full assurance of triumph. Few troops seemed to be before them; for Maitland's men (2nd and 3rd battalions of the 1st Foot Guards) had lain down behind the bank of the cross-road to get some shelter from the awful cannonade. "Stand up, Guards, and make ready," exclaimed the Duke when the French were but sixty paces away. The volley that flashed from their lengthy front staggered the column, and seemed to force it bodily back. In vain did the French officers wave their swords and attempt to deploy into line. Mangled in front by Maitland's brigade, on its flank by our 33rd and 69th Regiments drawn up in square, and by the deadly salvos of Chassé's Dutch-Belgians,[1] that stately array shrank and shrivelled up. "Now's the time, my boys," shouted Lord Saltoun; and the thin red line, closing with the mass, drove it pell-mell down the slope.

Near the foot the victors fell under the fire of the rear portion of the Imperial Guards, who, undaunted by their comrades' repulse, rolled majestically upwards. Colborne now wheeled the 52nd (Oxfordshire) Regiment on the crest in a line nearly parallel to their advance, and opened a deadly fire on their flank, which was hotly returned; Maitland's men, re-forming on the crest, gave them a volley in front; and some Hanoverians at the rear of Hougoumont also galled their rear. Seizing the favourable moment when the column writhed in anguish, Colborne cheered his men to the charge, and, aided by the second 95th Rifles, utterly overthrew the last hope of France. Continuing his advance, and now supported by the 71st Regiment, he swept our front clear as far as the orchard of La Haye Sainte.[2]

[1] See Boulger's "The Belgians at Waterloo" (1901), p. 33.

[2] The formation and force of the French Guards in this attack have been much discussed. Thiers omits all notice of the second column; Houssaye limits its force to a single battalion, but his account is not convincing. On p. 385 he says nine battalions of the Guard advanced into the valley, but, on p. 389, he accounts only for six. Other authorities agree that eight joined in the attack. As to their formation, Houssaye advances many proofs that it was in hollow squares. Here is one more. On the 19th Basil Jackson rode along the slope and ridge near the back of Hougoumont and talked with some of the wounded of the Imperial

The Emperor had at first watched the charge with feelings of buoyant hope; for Friant, who came back wounded, reported that success was certain. As the truth forced itself on him, he turned pale as a corpse. "Why! they are in confusion," he exclaimed; "all is lost for the present." A thrill of agony also shot through the French lines. Donzelot's onset had at one time staggered Halkett's brigade; but the hopes aroused by the charge of the Guard and the rumour of Grouchy's approach gave place to dismay when the veterans fell back and Ziethen's Prussians debouched from Papelotte. To the cry of "The Guard gives way," there succeeded shouts of "treason." The Duke, noting the confusion, waved on his whole line to the longed-for advance. Menaced in front by the thin red line, and in rear by Colborne's glorious charge, D'Erlon's divisions broke up in general rout. For a time, three rocks stood boldly forth above this disastrous ebb. They were the battalions of the Guard previously repulsed, and that had rallied around the Emperor on the rise south of La Haye Sainte. In front of them the three regiments of

Guard. "As they lay they formed large squares, of which the centres were hollow" (p. 57). Maitland ("Waterloo Letters," p. 244) says: "There was one great column at first, which separated into two parts." Gawler (p. 292) adds: that "The second column was subdivided in two parts, close together, and that *its whole flank was much longer than the front of our 52nd regiment.*" It is difficult to reconcile all this with the attack in hollow squares; but probably the squares (or oblongs?) followed each other so closely as to seem like a serried column. None of our men could see whether the masses were solid or hollow, but naturally assumed them to be solid, and hence greatly over-estimated their strength. A column made up of hollow squares is certainly an odd formation, but perhaps is not unsuitable to withstand cavalry and overthrow infantry.

I cannot accept Houssaye's statement (p. 393) that the French squares attacked our front at four different places, from the 52nd regiment on our right to the Brunswickers in our centre, a quarter of a mile to the east. The only evidence that favours this is Macready's ("Waterloo Letters," p. 330); he says that the men who attacked his square (30th and 73rd regiments) were of the Middle Guard; for their wounded said so; but Kelly, of the same square, thought they were Donzelot's men, who certainly attacked there. Siborne, seemingly on the strength of Macready's statement, says that part of the Guards' column diverged thither: but this is unlikely. Is it credible that the Guards, less than 4,000 strong, should have spread their attacks over a quarter of a mile of front? Was not the column the usual method of attack? I submit, then, that my explanation of the Guard attacking in hollow squares or oblongs, formed in two chief columns, harmonizes the known facts of the case.

Adam's brigade stopped to re-form; but at the Duke's command — "Go on, go on; they will not stand" — Colborne charged them, and they gave way.

And now, as the sun shot its last gleams over the field, the swords of the British horsemen were seen to flash and fall with relentless vigour. The brigades of Vandeleur and Vivian, well husbanded during the day, had been slipped upon the foe. The effect was electrical. The retreat became a rout that surged wildly around the last squares of the Guard. In one of them Napoleon took refuge for a space, still hoping to effect a rally, while outside Ney rushed from band to band, brandishing a broken sword, foaming with fury, and launching at the runaways the taunt "Cowards! have you forgotten how to die?"[1]

But panic now reigned supreme. Adam's brigade was at hand to support our horsemen; and shortly after nine there knelled from Planchenoit the last stroke of doom, the shouts of Prussians at last victorious over the stubborn defence. "The Guard dies and does not surrender" — such are the words attributed by some to Michel, by others to Cambronne before he was stretched senseless on the ground.[2] Whether spoken or not, some such thought prompted whole companies to die for the honour of their flag. And their chief, why did he not share their glorious fate? Gourgaud says that Soult forced him from the field. If so (and Houssaye discredits the story) Soult never served his master worse. The only dignified course was to act up to his recent proclamation that the time had come for every Frenchman of spirit to conquer or die. To belie those words by an ignominious flight was to court the worst of sins in French political life, ridicule.

And the flight was ignominious. Wellington's weary troops, after several times mistaking friends for foes in the dusk, halted south of Rossomme and handed over the pursuit to the Prussians, many of whom had fought but little and now drank deep the draught of revenge. By the light of the rising moon Gneisenau led on his horsemen in a pursuit compared with which that of Jena was

[1] Janin, p. 45.

[2] Bertrand at St. Helena said he *heard* Michel utter these words (Montholon, vol. iii., ch. iv.).

tame. At Genappe Napoleon hoped to make a stand: but the place was packed with wagons and thronged with men struggling to get at the narrow bridge. At the blare of the Prussian trumpets, the panic became frightful; the Emperor left his carriage and took to horse as the hurrahs drew near. Seven times did the French form bivouacs, and seven times were they driven out and away. At Quatre Bras he once more sought to gather a few troops; but ere he could do so the Uhlans came on. With tears trickling down his pallid cheeks, he resumed his flight over another field of carnage, where ghastly forms glinted on all sides under the pale light of dawn. After further futile efforts at Charleroi, he hurried on towards Paris, followed at some distance by groups amounting to about 10,000 men, the sorry remnant still under arms of the host that fought at Waterloo: 25,000 lay dead or wounded there: some thousands were taken prisoners: the rest were scattering to their homes. Wellington lost 10,360 killed and wounded, of whom 6,344 were British: the Prussian loss was about 6,000 men.

The causes of Napoleon's overthrow are not hard to find. The lack of timely pursuit of Blücher and Wellington on the 17th enabled those leaders to secure posts of vantage and to form an incisive plan which he did not fully fathom even at the crisis of the battle. Full of overweening contempt of Wellington, he began the fight heedlessly and wastefully. When the Prussians came on, he underrated their strength and believed to the very end that Grouchy would come up and take them between two fires. But, in the absence of prompt, clear, and detailed instructions, that Marshal was left a prey to his fatal notion that Wavre was the one point to be aimed at and attacked. Despite the heavy cannonade on the west he persisted in this strange course; while Napoleon staked everything on a supreme effort against Wellington. This last was an act of appalling hardihood; but he explained to Cockburn on the voyage to St. Helena that, still confiding in Grouchy's approach, he felt no uneasiness at the Prussian movements, "which were, in fact, already checked, and that he considered the battle to have been, on the whole, rather in his favour than otherwise." The

explanation has every appearance of sincerity. But would any other great commander have staked his last reserve and laid bare his rear solely in reliance on the ability of an almost untried leader who had sent not a single word that justified the hopes now placed in him?

We here touch the weak points in Napoleon's intellectual armour. Gifted with almost superhuman insight and energy himself, he too often credited his paladins with possessing the same divine afflatus. Furthermore, he had a supreme contempt for his enemies. Victorious in a hundred fights over second-rate opponents in his youth, he could not now school his hardened faculties to the caution needed in a contest with Wellington, Gneisenau, and Blücher. Only after he had ruined himself and France did he realize his own errors and the worth of the allied leaders. During the voyage to England he confessed to Bertrand: "The Duke of Wellington is fully equal to myself in the management of an army, *with the advantage of possessing more prudence.*"[1]

[1] Maitland's "Narrative," p. 222. Basil Jackson, who knew Gourgaud well at St. Helena, learnt from him that he could not finish his account of Waterloo, "as Napoleon could never decide on the best way of ending the great battle: that he (Gourgaud) had suggested no less than six different ways, but none were satisfactory" ("Waterloo and St. Helena," p. 102). Gourgaud's "Journal" shows that Napoleon blamed in turn the rain, Ney, Grouchy, Vandamme, Guyot, and Soult; but he ends — "it was a fatality; for in spite of all, I should have won that battle."

CHAPTER XLI

FROM THE ELYSÉE TO ST. HELENA

Napoleon was far from accepting Waterloo as a final blow. At Philippeville, on the day after the battle, he wrote to his brother Joseph that he would speedily have 300,000 men ready to defend France: he would harness his guns with carriage-horses, raise 100,000 conscripts, and arm them with muskets taken from the royalists and malcontent National Guards: he would arouse Dauphiné, Lyonnais, and Burgundy, and overwhelm the enemy. "But the people must help me and not bewilder me. . . . Write to me what effect this horrible piece of bad luck has had on the Chamber. I believe the deputies will feel convinced that their duty in this crowning moment is to rally round me and save France."[1]

The tenacious will, then, is only bent, not broken. Waterloo is merely a greater La Rothière, calling for a mightier defensive effort than that of 1814. Such are his intentions, even when he knows not that Grouchy is escaping from the Prussians. The letter breathes a firm resolve. He has no scruples as to the wickedness of spurring on a wearied people to a conflict with Europe. As yet he forms no magnanimous resolve to take leave of a nation whom his genius may once more excite to a fatal frenzy. He still seems unable to conceive of France happy and prosperous apart from himself. In indissoluble union they will struggle on and defy the world.

Such was the frame of mind in which he reached the Elysée Palace early on the 21st of June. For a time he was much agitated. "Oh, my God!" he exclaimed to Lavalette, raising his eyes to heaven and walking up and

[1] "Lettres inédites de Napoléon."

down the room. But after taking a warm bath — his unfailing remedy for fatigue — he became calm, and discussed with the Ministers plans of a national defence. The more daring advised the prorogation of the Chambers and the declaration of a state of siege in Paris ; but others demurred to a step that would lead to civil war. The Council dragged on at great length, the Emperor only once rousing himself from his weariness to declare that all was not lost ; that *he*, and not the Chambers, could save France. If so, he should have gone to the deputies, thrilled them with that commanding voice, or dissolved them at once. Montholon states that this course was recommended by Cambacérès, Carnot, and Maret, but that most of the Ministers urged him not to expose his wearied frame to the storms of an excited assembly. At St. Helena he told Gourgaud that, despite his fatigue, he would have made the effort had he thought success possible, but he did not.[1]

The Chamber of Deputies meanwhile was acting with vigour. Agonized by the tales of disaster already spread abroad by wounded soldiers, it eagerly assented to Lafayette's proposal to sit in permanence and declare any attempt at dissolution an act of high treason. So unblenching a defiance, which recalled the Tennis Court Oath of twenty-six years before, struck the Emperor almost dumb with astonishment. Lucien bade him prepare for a *coup d'état:* but Napoleon saw that the days for such an act were passed. He had squandered the physical and moral resources bequeathed by the Revolution. Its armies were mouldering under the soil of Spain, Russia, Germany, and Belgium ; and a decade of reckless ambition had worn to tatters Rousseau's serviceable theory of a military dictatorship. Exhausted France was turning away from him to the prime source of liberty, her representatives.

These were doubtless the thoughts that coursed through his brain as he paced with Lucien up and down the garden of the Elysée. A crowd of *fédérés* and workmen outside cheered him frantically. He saluted them with a smile ; but, says Pasquier, "the expression of his eyes showed

[1] Gourgaud, "Journal inédit de Ste. Hélène," vol. ii., p. 321, small edit.

the sadness that filled his soul." True, he might have led that unthinking rabble against the Chambers; but that would mean civil war, and from this he shrank. Still Lucien bade him strike. "Dare," he whispered with Dantonesque terseness. "Alas," replied his brother, "I have dared only too much already." Davoust also opined that it was too late, now that the deputies had firmly seized the reins and were protected by the National Guards of Paris.

And so Napoleon let matters drift. In truth, he was "bewildered" by the disunion of France. It was a France that he knew not, a land given over to *idéalogues* and traitors. His own Minister, Fouché, was working to sap his power, and yet he dared not have him shot! What wonder that the helpless autocrat paced restlessly to and fro, or sat as in a dream! In the evening Carnot went to the Peers, Lucien to the Deputies, to appeal for a united national effort against the Coalition, but the simple earnestness of the one and the fraternal fervour of the other alike failed. When Lucien finally exclaimed against any desertion of Napoleon, Lafayette fiercely shot at him the long tale of costly sacrifices which France had offered up at the shrine of Napoleon's glory, and concluded: "We have done enough for him: our duty is to save *la patrie*."

On the morrow came the news that Grouchy had escaped from the Prussians; and that the relics of Napoleon's host were rallying at Laon. But would not this encouragement embolden the Emperor to crush the contumacious Chambers? Evidently the case was urgent. He must abdicate, or they would dethrone him — such was the purport of their message to the Elysée; but, as an act of grace, they allowed him *an hour* in which to forestall their action. Shortly after midday, on the advice of his Ministers, he took the final step of his official career. Lucien and Carnot begged him for some time to abdicate only in favour of his son;[1] and he did so, but with the bitter remark: "My son! What a chimera! No, it is for the Bourbons that I abdicate! They at least are not prisoners at Vienna."

The deputies were of his opinion. Despite frantic

[1] Lucien, "Mems.," vol. iii., p. 327.

efforts of the Bonapartists, they passed over Napoleon II. without any effective recognition, and at once appointed an executive Commission of five — Carnot, Caulaincourt, Fouché, Grenier, and Quinette. Three of them were regicides, and Fouché was chosen their President. We can gauge Napoleon's wrath at seeing matters thus promptly rolled back to where they were before Brumaire by his biting comment that he had made way for the King of Rome, not for a Directory which included one traitor and two babies. His indignation was just. An abdication forced on by *idéalogues* was hateful; to be succeeded by Fouché seemed an unforgivable insult; but he touched the lowest depth of humiliation on the 25th, when he received from that despicable schemer an order to leave Paris.

He obeyed on that first Sunday after Waterloo, driving off quietly to Malmaison, there to be joined by Hortense Beauharnais and a few faithful friends. At that ill-omened abode, where Josephine had breathed her last shortly after his first abdication, he spent four uneasy days. At times he was full of fight. He sent to the "Moniteur" a proclamation urging the army to make "some efforts more, and the Coalition will be dissolved." The manifesto was suppressed by Fouché's orders.

Meanwhile the invaders pressed on rapidly towards Compiègne. They met with no attempts at a national rising, a fact which proves the welcome accorded to Napoleon in March to have been mainly the outcome of military devotion and of the dislike generally felt for the Bourbons. It is a libel on the French people to suppose that a truly national impulse in his favour would have vanished with a single defeat. In vain did the Provisional Government sue for an armistice that would stay the advance. Wellington refused outright; but Blücher declared that he would consider the matter if Napoleon were handed over to him, *dead or alive*. On hearing of this, Wellington at once wrote his ally a private remonstrance, which drew from Gneisenau a declaration that, as the Duke was held back *by parliamentary considerations and by the wish to prolong the life of the villain whose career had extended England's power*, the Prussians would see to it that Napo-

leon was handed over to them for execution conformably to the declaration of the Congress of Vienna.[1]

But the Provisional Government acted honestly towards Napoleon. On the 26th Fouché sent General Becker to watch over him and advise him to set out for Rochefort, *en route* to the United States, for which purpose passports were being asked from Wellington. Becker found the ex-Emperor a prey to quickly varying moods. At one time he seemed "sunk into a kind of *mollesse*, and very careful about his ease and comfort": he ate hugely at meals: or again he affected a rather coarse joviality, showing his regard for Becker by pulling his ear. His plans varied with his moods. He declared he would throw himself into the middle of France and fight to the end, or that he would take ship at Rochefort with Bertrand and Savary alone, and steal past the English squadron; but when Mme. Bertrand exclaimed that this would be cruel to her, he readily gave up the scheme.[2]

It is not easy to gauge his feelings at this time. Apart from one outburst to Lavalette of pity for France, he seems not to have realized how unspeakably disastrous his influence had been on the land which he found in a victoriously expansive phase, and now left prostrate at the feet of the allies and the Bourbons. Hatred and contempt of the upper classes for their "fickle" desertion of him, these, if we may judge from his frequent allusions to the topic during the voyage, were the feelings uppermost in his mind; and this may explain why he wavered between the thought of staking all on a last effort against the allies and the plan of renewing in America the career now closed to him in Europe.

He certainly was not a prey to torpor and dumb despair. His brain still clutched eagerly at public affairs, as if unable to realize that they had slipped beyond his control; and his behaviour showed that he was still *un être politique*, with whom power was all in all. He evinced few signs of deep emotion on bidding farewell to his de-

[1] Stuart's despatch of June 28th, "F. O.," France, No. 117; Gneisenau to Müffling, June 27th, "Passages," App.

[2] Croker ("Papers," vol. iii., p. 67) had this account from Jaucourt, who had it from Becker.

voted followers: but whether this resulted from inner hardness, or resentment at his fall, or a sense of dignified prudence, it is impossible to say. When Denon, the designer of his medals, sobbed on bidding him adieu, he remarked: *Mon cher, ne nous attendrissons pas: il faut dans les crises comme celle-ci se conduire avec froid.* This surely was one source of his power over an emotional people: his feelings were the servant, not the master, of his reason.

Meanwhile the Prussians were drawing near to Paris. Early on the 29th they were at Argenteuil, and Blücher detached a flying column to seize the bridge of Chatou over the Seine near Malmaison and carry off Napoleon on the following night. But Davoust and Fouché warded off the danger. While the Marshal had the nearest bridges of the Seine barricaded or burnt, Fouché on the night of the 28th–29th sent an order to Napoleon to leave at once for Rochefort and set sail with two frigates, even though the English passports had not arrived.

He received the news calmly, and then with unusual animation requested Becker to submit to the Government a scheme for rapidly rallying the troops around Paris, whereupon he, *as General Bonaparte*, would surprise first Blücher and then Wellington — they were two days' marches apart: then, after routing the foe, he would resume his journey to the coast. The Commission would have none of it. The reports showed that the French troops were so demoralized that success was not to be hoped for.[1] And if a second Montmirail were snatched from Blücher, would it bring more of glory to Napoleon or of useless bloodshed to France? Those who look on the world as an arena for the exploits of heroes at the cost of ordinary mortals may applaud the scheme. But could men who were responsible to France regard it as anything but a final proof of Napoleon's perverse optimism, or a flash of his unquenchable ambition, or a last mad bid for power? He showed signs of anger on hearing of their refusal, but set out for Rochefort at 6 P.M.; and thus the Prussians were cheated of their prey by

[1] Ollech, pp. 350–360. The French cavalry success near Versailles was due to exceptional circumstances.

a few hours. Bertrand, Savary, Gourgaud, and Becker accompanied him.

The cheers of troops and people at Niort, and again at Rochefort, where he arrived on July 3rd, reawakened his fighting instincts; and as the westerly winds precluded all hope of the two frigates slipping quickly down either of the practicable outlets so as to elude the British cruisers, he again sought permission to take command of the French forces, now beginning to fall back from Paris behind the line of the Loire. Again his offer was refused; and messages came thick and fast bidding Becker get him away from the mainland. Such was the desire of his best friends. Paris capitulated to the allies on July 4th, and both French royalists and Prussians were eager to get hold of him. Thus, while he sat weaving plans of a campaign on the Loire, the tottering Government at Paris pressed on his embarkation, hinting that force would be used should further delays ensue. Sadly, then, on July 8th, he went on board the "Saale," moored near L'Ile d'Aix, opposite the mouth of the Charente.

He was now in sore straits. The orders from Paris expressly forbade his setting foot again on the mainland, and most of the great towns had already hoisted the white flag. In front of him was the Bay of Biscay, swept by British cruisers, which the French naval officers had scant hopes of escaping. There was talk among Napoleon's suite, which now included Montholon, Las Cases, and Lallemand, of attempting flight from the Gironde, or in the hold of a small Danish sloop then at Rochefort, or on two fishing boats moored to the north of L'Ile de Ré; but these plans were given up in consequence of the close watch kept by our cruisers at all points. The next day brought with it a despatch from Paris ordering the ex-Emperor to set sail within twenty-four hours.

On the morrow Napoleon sent Savary and Las Cases with a letter to H.M.S. "Bellerophon," then cruising off the main channel — that between the islands of Oléron and Ré — asking whether the permits for Napoleon's voyage to America had arrived, or his departure would be prevented. Savary also inquired whether his passage on a merchant-ship would be stopped. The commander,

Captain Maitland, had received strict orders to intercept Napoleon; but, seeking to gain time and to bring Admiral Hotham up with other ships, he replied that he would oppose the frigates by force: neither could he permit Napoleon to set sail on a merchant-ship until he had the warrant of his admiral for so doing. The "Bellerophon," "Myrmidon," and "Slaney" now drew closer in to guard the middle channel, while a corvette watched each of the difficult outlets on the north and south.[1]

Three days of sorrow and suspense now ensued. On the 12th came the news of the entry of Louis XVIII. into Paris, the collapse of the Provisional Government, and the general hoisting of the *fleur-de-lys* throughout France. On the 13th Joseph Bonaparte came for a last interview with his brother on the Ile d'Aix. Montholon states that the ex-King offered to change places with the ex-Emperor and thus allow him the chance of escaping on a neutral ship from the Gironde. Gourgaud does not refer to any such offer, nor does Bertrand in his letter of July 14th to Joseph. In any case, it was not put to the test; for royalism was rampant on the mainland, and two of our cruisers hovered about the Gironde. Sadly the two brothers parted, and for ever. Then the other schemes were again mooted only to be given up once more; and late on the 13th Napoleon dictated the following letter, to be taken by Gourgaud to the Prince Regent:

"Exposed to the factions which distract my country and to the enmity of the greatest Powers of Europe, I have closed my political career, and I come, like Themistocles, to throw myself upon the hospitality of the British people. I put myself under the protection of their laws, which I claim from your Royal Highness, as the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies." [2]

On the 14th Gourgaud and Las Cases took this letter to the "Bellerophon," whereupon Maitland assured them

[1] Maitland's "Narrative," pp. 23–39, disproves Thiers' assertion that Napoleon was not expected there. Maitland's letter of July 10th to Hotham ("F. O.," France, No. 126, not in the "Narrative") ends: "It appears to me from the anxiety the bearers express to get away, that they are very hard pressed by the Government at Paris." Hotham's instructions of July 8th to Maitland were most stringent.

[2] The date of the letter disproves Las Cases' statement that it was

that he would convey Napoleon to England, Gourgaud preceding them on the "Slaney"; but that the ex-Emperor *would be entirely at the disposal of our Government.* This last was made perfectly clear to Las Cases, who understood English, though at first he feigned not to do so; but, unfortunately, Maitland did not exact from him a written acknowledgment of this understanding. Gourgaud was transferred to the "Slaney," which soon set sail for Torbay, while Las Cases reported to Napoleon on L'Ile d'Aix what had happened. Thereupon Bertrand wrote to Maitland that Napoleon would come on board on the morrow:

". . . If the Admiral, in consequence of the demand that you have addressed to him, sends you the permits for the United States, His Majesty will go there with pleasure; but in default of them, he will go voluntarily to England as a private individual to enjoy the protection of the laws of your country."

Now, either Las Cases misinterpreted Maitland's words and acts, or Napoleon hoped to impose on the captain by the statements just quoted. Maitland had not sent to Hotham for permits; he held out no hopes of Napoleon's going to America; he only promised to take him to England *to be at the disposal of the Prince Regent.* Napoleon, taking no notice of the last stipulation, now promised to go to England, not as Emperor, but as a private individual. He took this step soon after dawn on the 15th, when any lingering hopes of his escape were ended by the sight of Admiral Hotham's ship, "Superb," in the offing. On leaving the French brig, "Epervier," he was greeted with the last cheers of *Vive l'Empereur*, cheers that died away almost in a wail as his boat drew near to the "Bellerophon." There he was greeted respectfully, but without a salute. He wore the green uniform, with gold and scarlet facings, of a colonel of the *chasseurs à cheval* of the Guard, with white waistcoat and military boots;

written *after* his second interview with Maitland, and *in consequence of* the offers Maitland had made!

Napoleon's reference to Themistocles has been much admired. But why? The Athenian statesman was found to have intrigued with Persia against Athens in time of peace; he fled to the Persian monarch and was richly rewarded *as a renegade.* No simile could have been less felicitous.

and Maitland thought him "a remarkably strong, well-built man." Keeping up a cheerful demeanour, he asked a number of questions about the ship, and requested to be shown round even thus early, while the men were washing the decks. He inquired whether the "Bellerophon" would have worsted the two French frigates, and acquiesced in Maitland's affirmative reply. He expressed admiration of all that he saw, including the portrait of Maitland's wife hanging in the cabin; and the captain felt the full force of that seductive gift of pleasing, which was not the least important of the great man's powers.

He was accompanied by General and Mme. Bertrand, the former a tall, slim, good-looking man, of refined manners and domestic habits, though of a sensitive and hasty temper; his wife, a lady of slight figure, but stately carriage, the daughter of an Irishman named Dillon, who lost his life in the Revolution. Her vivacious manners bespoke a warm impulsive nature, that had revelled in the splendour of her high ceremonial station, and now seemed strained beyond endurance by the trials threatening her and her three children. The Bertrands had been with Napoleon at Elba, and enjoyed his complete confidence. Younger than they were General (Count) Montholon and his wife — he, a short but handsome man, his consort a sweet unassuming woman — who showed their devotion to the ex-Emperor by exchanging a life of luxury for exile in his service. Count Las Cases, a small man, whose thin eager face and furtive glances revealed his bent for intrigue, was the eldest of the party. He had been a naval officer, had then lived in England as an *émigré*, but after the Peace of Amiens took civil service under Napoleon; he now brought with him his son, a lad of fifteen, fresh from the Lycée. We need not notice the figures of Savary and Lallemand, as they were soon to part company. Maingaud the surgeon, Marchand the head valet, several servants, and the bright little boy of the Montholons completed the list.

The voyage passed without incident. Napoleon's health and appetite were on the whole excellent, and he suffered less than the rest from sea-sickness. The delicate Las Cases, who had donned his naval uniform, was in such

distress as to move the mirth of the crew, whereupon Napoleon sharply bade him appear in plain clothes so as not to disgrace the French navy. For the great man himself the crew soon felt a very real regard; witness the final confession of one of them to Maitland: "Well, they may abuse that man as much as they like, but if the people of England knew him as well as we do, they would not hurt a hair of his head." — What a tribute this to the mysterious power of genius!

On passing Ushant, he remained long upon deck, silent and abstracted, casting melancholy looks at the land he was never more to see. As they neared Torbay, the exile was loud in praise of the beauty of the scene, which he compared with that of Porto Ferrajo. Whatever misgivings he felt before embarking on the "Bellerophon" had apparently disappeared. He had been treated with every courtesy and had met with only one rebuff. He prompted Mme. Bertrand, who spoke English well, to sound Maitland as to the acceptance of a box containing his (Napoleon's) portrait set in diamonds. This the captain very properly refused.[1]

In Torbay troubles began to thicken upon the party. Gourgaud rejoined them on the 24th: he had not been allowed to land. Orders came on the 26th for the "Bellerophon" to proceed to Plymouth; and the rumour gained ground that St. Helena would be their destination. It was true. On July 31st, Sir Henry Bunbury, Secretary to the Admiralty, and Lord Keith, Admiral in command at Plymouth, laid before him in writing the decision of our Government, that, in order to prevent any further disturbance to the peace of Europe, it had been decided to restrain his liberty — "to whatever extent may be necessary for securing that first and paramount object" — and that St. Helena would be his place of residence, as it was healthy, and would admit of a smaller degree of restraint than might be necessary elsewhere.

Against this he made a lengthy protest, declaring that he was not a prisoner of war, that he came as a passenger on the "Bellerophon" "after a previous negotiation with the commander," that he demanded the rights of a British

[1] "Narrative," p. 244.

NAPOLEON ON BOARD THE "BELLEROPHON" AT PLYMOUTH.

From a mezzotint by Ch. Turner (1816) after a painting by Sir C. L. Eastlake.

citizen, and wished to settle in a country house far from the sea, where he would submit to the surveillance of a commissioner over his actions and correspondence. St. Helena would kill him in three months, for he was wont to ride twenty leagues a day; he preferred death to St. Helena. Maitland's conduct had been a deliberate snare. To deprive him (Napoleon) of his liberty would be an eternal disgrace to England; for in coming to our shores he had offered the Prince Regent the finest page of his history. — Our officials then bowed and withdrew. He recalled Keith, and when the latter remarked that to go to St. Helena was better than being sent to Louis XVIII. or to Russia, the captive exclaimed, "Russia! God keep me from that."[1]

It is unnecessary to traverse his statements at length. The foregoing recital of facts will have shown that he was completely at the end of his resources, and that Maitland had not made a single stipulation as to his reception in England. Indeed, Napoleon never reproached Maitland; he left that to Las Cases to do; and the captain easily refuted these insinuations, with the approval of Montholon. If there was any misunderstanding, it was certainly due to Las Cases.[2]

Indeed, the thought of Napoleon settling dully down in the Midlands is ludicrous. How could a man who revelled in vast schemes, whose mind preyed on itself if there were no facts and figures to grind, or difficulties to overcome, ever sink to the level of a Justice Shallow? And if he longed for repose, would the Opposition in England and the malcontents in France have let him rest? Inevitably he would become a rallying point for all the malcontents of Europe. Besides, our engagements to the allies bound us to guard him securely; and we were under few personal obligations to a man who, during the Peace of Amiens, persistently urged us to drive forth the Bourbons from our land, who at its close forcibly detained 10,000 Britons in defiance of the law of nations, and whose ambition added £600,000,000 to our National Debt.

Ministers had decided on St. Helena by July 28th. Their

[1] "F. O.," France, No. 126; Allardyce, "Mems. of Lord Keith."
[2] Maitland, pp. 206, 239–242; Montholon, vol. i., ch. iii.

decision was clinched by a Memorandum of General Beatson, late Governor of the island, dated July 29th, recommending St. Helena, because all the landing places were protected by batteries, and the semaphores recently placed on the lofty cliffs would enable the approach of a rescue squadron to be descried sixty miles off, and the news to be speedily signalled to the Governor's House. Napoleon's appeal and protests were accordingly passed over; and, in pursuance of advice just to hand from Castlereagh at Paris, Ministers decided to treat him, not as our prisoner, but as the prisoner of all the Powers. A Convention was set in hand as to his detention; it was signed on August 2nd at Paris, and bound the other Powers to send Commissioners as witnesses to the safety of the custody.[1]

His departure from Plymouth was hastened by curious incidents. Crowds of people assembled there to see the great man, and shoals of boats — Maitland says more than a thousand on fine days — struggled and jostled to get as near the "Bellerophon" as the guard-boats would allow. Two or three persons were drowned; but still the swarm pressed on. Many of the men wore carnations — a hopeful sign this seemed to Las Cases — and the women waved their handkerchiefs when he appeared on the poop or at the open gangway. Maitland was warned that a rescue would be attempted on the night of the 3rd–4th; and certainly the Frenchmen were very restless at that time. They believed that if Napoleon could only set foot on shore he must gain the rights of Habeas Corpus.[2] And there seemed

[1] "Castlereagh Papers," 3rd series, vol. ii., pp. 434, 438. Beatson's Mem. is in "F. O.," France, No. 123. This and other facts refute Lord Holland's statement ("Foreign Reminiscences," p. 196) that the Government was treating for the transfer of St. Helena from the East India Company *early in* 1815. — Why does Lord Rosebery, "Napoleon: last Phase," p. 58, write that Lord Liverpool thought that Napoleon should either (1) be handed over to Louis XVIII. to be treated as a rebel; or (2) treated as vermin; or (3) that we would (regretfully) detain him? In his letters to Castlereagh at Paris, Liverpool expressly says it would be better for us, rather than any other Power, to detain him, and writes not a word about treating him as vermin. Lord Rosebery is surely aware that our Government and Wellington did their best *to preclude the possibility of the Prussians treating him as vermin.*

[2] Keith's letter of August 1st, in "F. O.," France, No. 123: "The General and many of his suite have an idea that if they could but

some chance of his gaining them. Very early on August 4th a man came down from London bringing a subpœna from the Court of King's Bench to compel Lord Keith and Captain Maitland to produce the person of Napoleon Bonaparte for attendance in London as witness in a trial for libel then pending. It appears that some one was to be sued for a libel on a naval officer, censuring his conduct in the West Indies; and it was suggested that if he (the defendant) could get Napoleon's evidence to prove that the French ships were at that time unserviceable, his case would be strengthened. An attorney therefore came down to Plymouth armed with a subpœna, with which he chased Keith on land and chased him by sea, until his panting rowers were foiled by the stout crew of the Admiral's barge. Keith also found means to let Maitland know how matters stood early on the 4th, whereupon the "Bellerophon" stood out to sea, her guard-boat keeping at a distance the importunate man with the writ.

The whole affair looks very suspicious. What defendant in a plain straightforward case would ever have thought of so far-fetched a device as that of getting the ex-Emperor to declare on oath that his warships in the West Indies had been unseaworthy? The tempting thought that it was a trick of some enterprising journalist in search of "copy" must also be given up as a glaring anachronism. On the other hand, it is certain that Napoleon's well-wishers in London and Plymouth were moving heaven and earth to get him ashore, or delay his departure.[1] In common with Sieyès, Lavalette, and Las

put foot on shore, no power could remove them, and they are determined to make the attempt if at all possible: they are becoming most refractory."

[1] In our Colonial Office archives, St. Helena, No. 1, is a letter of August 2nd, 1815, from an Italian subject of Napoleon (addressed to Mme. Bertrand, but really for him), stating that £16,000 had been placed in good hands for his service, one-fourth of which would be at once intrusted to firms at New York, Boston, "Philadelfi," and Charlestown, to provide means for effecting his escape, and claiming again "le plus beau trône de l'univers." It begs him to get his departure from Plymouth put off, for a plot had been formed by discontented British officers to get rid of the Premier and one other Minister. Napoleon must not build any hopes on the Prince Regent: "Le Silène de cette isle. . . . Je fonds donc mon

Cases, he had hoped much from the peculiarities of English law; and on July 28th he dictated to Las Cases a paper, "suited to serve as a basis to jurists," which the latter says he managed to send ashore.[1] If this be true, Napoleon himself may have spurred on his friends to the effort just described. Or else the plan may have occurred to some of his English admirers who wished to embarrass the Ministry. If so, their attempt met with the fate that usually befalls the efforts of our anti-national cliques on behalf of their foreign heroes: it did them harm: the authorities acted more promptly than they would otherwise have done: the "Bellerophon" put to sea a few days before the Frenchmen expected, with the result that they were exposed to a disagreeable cruise until the "Northumberland" (the ship destined for the voyage in place of the glorious old "Bellerophon") was ready to receive them on board.[2]

Dropping down from Portsmouth, the newer ship met the "Bellerophon" and "Tonnant," Lord Keith's ship, off the Start. The transhipment took place on the 7th, under the lee of Berry Head, Torbay. After dictating a solemn protest against the compulsion put upon him, the ex-Emperor thanked Maitland for his honourable conduct, spoke of his having hoped to buy a small estate in England where he might end his days in peace, and declaimed bitterly against the Government.

Rear-Admiral Sir George Cockburn, of the "Northumberland," then came by official order to search his baggage and that of his suite, so as to withdraw any large

espoir avant tout sur les navires marchands, Anglais comme autres, par l'apas du gain." The writer's name is illegible: so is the original postmark: the letter probably came from London: it missed Mme. Bertrand at Plymouth, followed her to St. Helena, and was opened by Sir G. Cockburn, who sent it back to our Government. I have published it *in extenso* in the "Owens College Historical Essays," as also an accompanying letter from Miss McKinnon of Binfield, Berks, to Napoleon, stating that her mother, still living, had known him and given him hospitality when a lieutenant at Valence.

[1] Las Cases, "Mémorial," vol. i., pp. 55, 65.

[2] I wish I had space to give a whole chapter to the relations between Napoleon and the Whigs, and to show how their championship of him worked mischief on both sides in 1803–21, enticing him on to many risky ventures, and ruining the cause of Reform in England for a generation.

sums of money that might be thereafter used for effecting an escape. Savary and Marchand were present while this was done by Cockburn's secretary with as much delicacy as possible: 4,000 gold Napoleons (80,000 francs) were detained to provide a fund for part maintenance of the illustrious exile. The diamond necklace which Hortense had handed to him at Malmaison was at that time concealed on Las Cases, who continued to keep it as a sacred trust. The ex-Emperor's attendants were required to give up their swords during the voyage. Montholon states that when the same request was made by Keith to Napoleon, the only reply was a flash of anger from his eyes, under which the Admiral's tall figure shrank away, and his head, white with years, fell on his breast. Alas, for the attempt at melodrama! *Maitland was expressly told by Lord Keith not to proffer any such request to the fallen chief.*

Apart from one or two exclamations that he would commit suicide rather than go to St. Helena, Napoleon had behaved with a calm and serenity that contrasted with the peevish gloom of his officers and the spasms of Mme. Bertrand. This unhappy lady, on learning their fate, raved in turn against Maitland, Gourgaud, Napoleon, and against her husband for accompanying him, and ended by trying to throw herself from a window. From this she was pulled back, whereupon she calmed down and secretly urged Maitland to write to Lord Keith to prevent Bertrand accompanying his master. The captain did so, but of course the Admiral declined to interfere. Her shrill complaints against Napoleon had, however, been heard on the other side of the thin partition, and fanned the dislike which Montholon and Gourgaud had conceived for her, and in part for her husband. These were the officers whom he selected as companions of exile. Las Cases was to go as secretary, and his son as page.

Savary, Lallemand, and Planat having been proscribed by Louis XVIII., were detained by our Government, and subsequently interned at Malta. On taking leave of Napoleon they showed deep emotion, while he bestowed the farewell embrace with remarkable composure. The surgeon, Maingaud, now declined to proceed to St. Helena, alleging that he had wanted to go to America only because

his uncle there was to leave him a legacy! At the same time Bertrand asked that O'Meara, the surgeon of the "Bellerophon," might accompany Napoleon to St. Helena. As Maingaud's excuse was very lame, and O'Meara had had one or two talks with Napoleon *in Italian*, Keith and Maitland should have seen that there was some understanding between them; but the Admiral consented to the proposed change. As to O'Meara's duplicity, we may quote from Basil Jackson's "Waterloo and St. Helena": "I *know* that he [O'Meara] was *fully enlisted* for Napoleon's service during the voyage from Rochefort to England." The sequel will show how disastrous it was to allow this man to go with the ex-Emperor.

In the admiral's barge that took him to the "Northumberland" the ex-Emperor "appeared to be in perfect good humour," says Keith, "talking of Egypt, St. Helena, of my former name being Elphinstone, and many other subjects, and joking with the ladies about being seasick."[1] In this firm matter-of-fact way did Napoleon accept the extraordinary change in his fortunes. At no time of his life, perhaps, was he so great as when, forgetting his own headlong fall, he sought to dispel the smaller griefs of Mmes. Bertrand and Montholon. A hush came over the crew as Napoleon mounted the side and set foot on the deck of the ship that was to bear him away to a life of exile. It was a sight that none could behold unmoved, as the great man uncovered, received the salute, and said with a firm voice: "Here I am, General, at your orders."

The scene was rich, not only in personal interest and pathos, but also in historic import. It marks the end of a cataclysmic epoch and the dawn of a dreary and confused age. We may picture the Muse of History, drawn distractedly from her abodes on the banks of the Seine, gazing in wonder on that event taking place under the

[1] "F. O.," France, No. 123. Keith adds: "I accompanied him to look at the accommodation on board the 'Northumberland,' with which he appeared to be well satisfied, saying, 'the apartments are convenient, and you see I carry my little tent-bed with me.'" The volume also contains the letter of Maingaud, etc. Bertrand requested permission from our Government to return in a year; Gourgaud, when his duty to his aged mother recalled him; O'Meara stipulated that he should still be a British surgeon on full pay and active service.

lee of Berry Head, her thoughts flashing back, perchance, to the days when William of Orange brought his fleet to shore at that same spot and baffled the designs of the other great ruler of France. The glory of that land is now once more to be shrouded in gloom. For a time, like an uneasy ghost, Clio will hover above the scenes of Napoleon's exploits and will find little to record but promises broken and development arrested by his unteachable successors.

But the march of Humanity is only clogged: it is not stayed. Ere long it breaks away into untrodden paths amidst the busy hives of industry or in the track of the colonizing peoples. The Muse follows in perplexity: her course at first seems dull and purposeless: her story, when it bids farewell to Napoleon, suffers a bewildering fall in dramatic interest: but at length new and varied fields open out to view. Democracy, embattled for seven sad years by Napoleon against her sister, Nationality, little by little awakens to a consciousness of the mistake that has blighted his fortune and hers, and begins to ally herself with the ill-used champion of the Kings. Industry, starved by War, regains her strength and goes forth on a career of conquest more enduring than that of the great warrior. And the peoples that come to the front are not those of the Latin race, whom his wars have stunted, but those of the untamable Teutonic stock, the lords of the sea and the leaders of Central Europe.

The treatment of the ex-Emperor henceforth differed widely from that which had been hastily arranged by the Czar for his sojourn at Elba. In that case he retained the title of Emperor; he reigned over the island, and was free to undertake coasting trips. As these generous arrangements had entailed on Europe the loss of more than 80,000 men in killed and wounded, it is not surprising that the British Ministers should now have insisted on far stricter rules, especially as they and their Commissioner had been branded as accomplices in the former escape. His comfort and dignity were now subordinated to security. As the title of Emperor would enable him to claim privileges incompatible with any measure of surveillance, it was firmly and consistently

denied to him; while he as persistently claimed it, and doubtless for the same reason. He was now to rank as a General not on active service; and Cockburn received orders, while treating him with deference and assigning to him the place of honour at table, to abstain from any acknowledgment of the imperial dignity. Napoleon soon put this question to the test by rising from dinner before the others had finished; but, with the exception of his suite, the others did not accompany him on deck. At this he was much piqued, as also at seeing that the officers did not uncover in his presence on the quarter-deck; but when Cockburn's behaviour in this respect was found to be quietly consistent, the anger of the exiles began to wear off — or rather it was thrust down.

One could wish that the conduct of our Government in this matter had been more chivalrous. It is true that we had only on two occasions acknowledged the imperial title, namely during the negotiations of 1806 and 1814; and to recognize it after his public outlawry would have been rather illogical, besides feeding the Bonapartists with hopes which, in the interests of France, it was well absolutely to close. Ministers might also urge that he himself had offered to live in England *as a private individual*, and that his transference to St. Helena, which allowed of greater personal liberty than could be accorded in England, did not alter the essential character of his detention. Nevertheless, their decision is to be regretted. The zeal of his partisans, far from being quenched, was inflamed by what they conceived to be a gratuitous insult; and these feelings, artfully worked upon by tales, medals, and pictures of the modern Prometheus chained to the rock, had no small share in promoting unrest in France.

Apart from this initial friction, Napoleon's relations to the Admiral and officers were fairly cordial. He chatted with him at the dinner-table and during the hour's walk that they afterwards usually took on the quarter-deck. His conversations showed no signs of despair or mental lethargy. They ranged over a great variety of topics, general and personal. He discussed details of navigation and shipbuilding with a minuteness of knowledge that surprised the men of the sea.

From his political conversations with Cockburn we may cull the following remarks. He said that he really meant to invade England in 1803–5, and to dictate terms of peace at London. He stoutly defended his execution of the Duc d'Enghien, and named none of the paltry excuses that his admirers were later on to discover for that crime. Referring to recent events, he inveighed against the French Liberals, declared that he had humoured the Chambers far too much, and dilated on the danger of representative institutions on the Continent. However much a Parliament might suit England, it was, he declared, highly perilous in Continental States. With respect to the future of France, he expressed the conviction that, as soon as the armies of occupation were withdrawn, there would be a general insurrection owing to the strong military bias of the people and their hatred of the Bourbons, now again brought back by devastating hordes of foreigners.[1]

This last observation probably explains the general buoyancy of his bearing. He did not consider the present settlement as final; and doubtless it was his boundless fund of hope that enabled him to triumph over the discomforts of the present, which left his companions morose and snappish. "His spirits are even," wrote Glover, the Admiral's secretary, at the equator, "and he appears perfectly unconcerned about his fate."[2] His recreations were chess, which he played with more vehemence than skill, and games of hazard, especially *vingt-et-un:* he began to learn "le wisth" from our officers. Sometimes he and Gourgaud amused themselves by extracting the square and cube roots of numbers; he also began to learn English from Las Cases. On some occasions he diverted his male companions with tales of his adventures, both military and amorous. His interest in the ship and in the events of the voyage did not flag. When a shark was caught and hauled up, "Bonaparte with the eagerness of a schoolboy scrambled on the poop to see it."

His health continued excellent. Despite his avoidance of vegetables and an excessive consumption of meat, he suffered little from indigestion, except during a few days

[1] "Extract from a Diary of Sir G. Cockburn," pp. 21, 51, 94.
[2] "Napoleon's last Voyages," p. 163.

of fierce sirocco wind off Madeira. He breakfasted about 10 on meat and wine, and remained in his cabin reading, dictating, or learning English, until about 3 P.M., when he played games and took exercise preparatory to dinner at 5. After a full meal, in which he partook by preference of the most highly dressed dishes of meat, he walked the deck for an hour or more. On one evening, the Admiral begged to be excused owing to a heavy equatorial rain-storm; but the ex-Emperor went up as usual, saying that the rain would not hurt him any more than the sailors; and it did not. The incident claims some notice: for it proves that, whatever later writers may say as to his decline of vitality in 1815, he himself was unaware of it, and braved with impunity a risk that a vigorous naval officer preferred to avoid. Moreover, the mere fact that he was able to keep up a heavy meat diet all through the tropics bespeaks a constitution of exceptional strength, unimpaired as yet by the internal malady which was to be his doom.

That one element of conviviality was not wanting at meals will appear from the official return of the consumption of wine at the Admiral's table by his seven French guests and six British officers: Port, 20 dozen; Claret, 45 dozen; Madeira, 22 dozen; Champagne, 13 dozen; Sherry, 7 dozen; Malmsey, 5 dozen.[1] The "Peruvian" had been detached from the squadron to Guernsey to lay in a stock of French wines specially for the exiles; and 15 dozen of claret — Napoleon's favourite beverage — were afterwards sent on shore at St. Helena for his use.

[1] I found this return in "Admiralty Secret Letters," 1804–16.

Lord Rosebery, in his desire to apologize for our treatment of Napoleon at every point, says ("Nap.: last Phase," p. 64): "They [the exiles] were packed like herrings in a barrel. The 'Northumberland,' it was said, had been arrested on her way back from India in order to convey Napoleon: all the water on board, it was alleged, had also been to India, was discoloured and tainted, as well as short in quantity." — On the contrary, the diary of Glover, in "Last Voyages of Nap.," p. 91, shows that the ship was in the Medway in July, and was fitted out at Portsmouth (where it was usual to keep supplies of water): also (p. 99) that Captain Ross gave up his cabin to the Bertrands, and Glover his to the Montholons: Gourgaud and Las Cases slept in the after cabin until cabins could be built for them. We have already seen (p. 488) that Napoleon was well satisfied with his own room. Water, wine, cattle, and fruit were taken in at Funchal in spite of the storm.

Doubtless the evenness of his health, which surprised Cockburn, Warden, and O'Meara alike, was largely due to his iron will. He knew that his exile must be disagreeable, but he had that useful faculty of encasing himself in the present, which dulls the edge of care. Besides, his tastes were not so exacting, or his temperament so volatile, as to shroud him in the gloom that besets weaker natures in time of trouble. Alas for him, it was far otherwise with his companions. The impressionable young Gourgaud, the thought-wrinkled Las Cases, the bright pleasure-loving Montholons, the gloomy Grand Marshal, Bertrand, and his mercurial consort, over whose face there often passed "a gleam of distraction" — these were not fashioned for a life of adversity. Thence came the long spells of *ennui*, broken by flashes of temper, that marked the voyage and the sojourn at St. Helena.

The storm-centre was generally Mme. Bertrand; her varying moods, that proclaimed her Irish-Creole parentage, early brought on her the hostility of the others, including Napoleon; and as the discovery of her little plot to prevent Bertrand going to St. Helena gave them a convenient weapon, the voyage was for her one long struggle against covert intrigues, thinly veiled sarcasms, seasickness, and despair. At last she has to keep to her cabin, owing to some nervous disorder. On hearing of this Napoleon remarks that it is better she should die — such is Gourgaud's report of his words. Unfortunately, she recovers: after ten days she reappears, receives the congratulations of the officers in the large cabin where Napoleon is playing chess with Montholon. He receives her with a stolid stare and goes on with the game. After a time the Admiral hands her to her seat at the dinner-table, on the ex-Emperor's left. Still no recognition from her chief! But the claret bottle that should be in front of him is not there: she reaches over and hands it to him. Then come the looked-for words: "Ah! comment se porte, madame?" — That is all.[1]

For Bertrand, even in his less amiable moods, Bonaparte ever had the friendly word that feeds the well-spring

[1] Gourgaud, "Journal," vol. i., pp. 47, 59 (small edition); "Last Voyages of Nap.," p. 198.

of devotion. On the "Bellerophon," when they hotly differed on a trivial subject, Bertrand testily replied to his dogmatic statements: "Oh! if you reply in that manner, there is an end of all argument." Far from taking offence at this retort, Napoleon soothed him and speedily restored him to good temper — a good instance of his forbearance to those whom he really admired.

Certainly the exiles were not happy among themselves. Even the amiable Mme. Montholon was the cause of one quarrel at table. After leaving Funchal, Cockburn states that a Roman Catholic priest there has offered to accompany the ex-Emperor. Napoleon replies in a way that proves his utter indifference; but the ladies launch out on the subject of religion. The discussion waxes hot, until the impetuous Gourgaud shoots out the remark that Montholon is wanting in respect for his wife. Whereupon the Admiral ends the scene by rising from table. Sir George Bingham, Colonel of the 53rd Regiment sailing in the squadron, passes the comment in his diary: "It is not difficult to see that envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness are firmly rooted in Napoleon's family, and that their residence in St. Helena will be rendered very uncomfortable by it."[1]

Intrigues there are of kaleidoscopic complexity, either against the superior Bertrands or the rising influence of Las Cases. This official has but yesterday edged his way into the Emperor's inner circle, and Gourgaud frankly reminds him of the fact: "'If I have come [with the Emperor] it is because I have followed him for four years, except at Elba. I have saved his life; and one loves those whom one has obliged. . . . But you, sir, he did not know you even by sight: then, why this great devotion of yours?' — I see around me," he continues, "many intrigues and deceptions. Poor Gourgaud, *qu'allais-tu faire dans cette galère?*"[2]

The young aide-de-camp's influence is not allowed to wane for lack of self-advertisement. Thus, when the battle of Waterloo is mentioned at table, he at once gives

[1] Sir G. Bingham's Diary in "Blackwood's Mag.," October, 1896, and "Cornhill," January, 1901.

[2] Gourgaud, "Journal," vol. i., p. 64.

his version of it, and stoutly maintains that, *whatever Napoleon may say to the contrary*, he (Napoleon) did mistake the Prussian army for Grouchy's force : and, waxing eloquent on this theme, he exclaims to his neighbour, Glover, "that at one time he [Gourgaud] might have taken the Duke of Wellington prisoner, but he *desisted from it, knowing the effusion of blood it would have occasioned.*"[1] — It is charitable to assume that this utterance was inspired by some liquid stronger than the alleged "stale water that had been to India and back."

On the whole, was there ever an odder company of shipmates since the days of Noah? A cheery solid Admiral, a shadowy Captain Ross who can navigate but does not open his lips, a talkative creature of the secretary type, the soldierly Bingham, the graceful courtly Montholons, the young General who out-gascons the Gascons, the wire-drawn subtle Las Cases, the melancholy Grand Marshal and his spasmodic consort — all of them there to guard or cheer that pathetic central figure, the world's conqueror and world's exile.

Meanwhile France was feeling the results of his recent enterprise. Enormous armies began to hold her down until the Bourbons, whose nullity was a pledge for peace, should be firmly re-established. Blücher, baulked of his wish to shoot Bonaparte, was with difficulty dissuaded by the protests of Wellington and Louis XVIII. from blowing up the Pont de Jéna at Paris; and the fierce veteran voiced the general opinion of Germans, including Metternich, that France must be partitioned, or at least give back Alsace and Lorraine to the Fatherland. Even Lord Liverpool, our cautious Premier, wrote on July 15th that, if Bonaparte remained at large, the allies ought to retain all the northern fortresses as a security.[2] But the knowledge that the warrior was in our power led our statesmen to bear less hardly on France. From the outset, Wellington sought to bring the allies to reason, and on August 11th he wrote a despatch that deserves to rank among his highest titles to fame. While granting that France was

[1] "Last Voyages," p. 130.

[2] "Castlereagh Papers," 3rd series, vol. ii., pp. 423, 433, 505; Seeley's "Stein," vol. iii., pp. 332–344.

still left "in too great strength for the rest of Europe," he pointed out that "revolutionary France is more likely to distress the world, than France, however strong in her frontier, under a regular Government; and that is the situation in which we ought to endeavour to place her."

This generous and statesmanlike judgment, consorting with that of the Czar, prevailed over the German policy of partition; and it was finally arranged by the Treaty of Paris of November 20th, 1815, that France should surrender only the frontier strips around Marienburg, Saarbrücken, Landau, and Chambéry, also paying war indemnities and restoring to their lawful owners all the works of art of which Napoleon had rifled the chief cities of the continent. In one respect these terms were extraordinarily lenient. Great Britain, after bearing the chief financial strain of the war, might have claimed some of the French colonies which she restored in 1814, or at least have required the surrender of the French claims on part of the Newfoundland coast. Even this last was not done, and alone of the States that had suffered loss of valuable lives, we exacted no territorial indemnity for the war of 1815.[1] In truth, our Ministers were content with placing France and her ancient dynasty in an honourable position, in the hope that Europe would thus at last find peace; and the forty years of almost unbroken rest that followed justified their magnanimity.

But there was one condition fundamental to the Treaty of Paris and essential to the peace of Europe, namely, that Napoleon should be securely guarded at St. Helena.

[1] See Gourgaud's "Journal," vol. ii., p. 315, for Napoleon's view as to our stupidity then: "In their place I would have stipulated that I alone could sail and trade in the eastern seas. It is ridiculous for them to leave Batavia (Java) to the Dutch and L'Ile de Bourbon to the French."

CHAPTER XLII

CLOSING YEARS

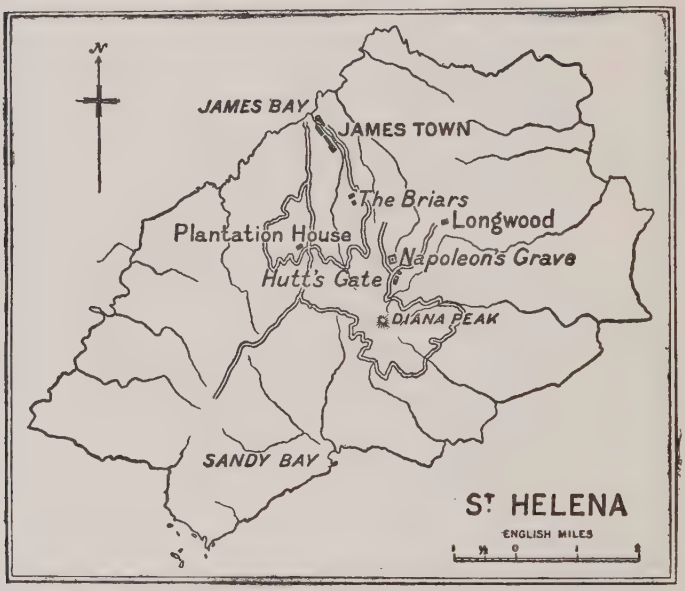
After a voyage of sixty-seven days the exiles sighted St. Helena — "that black wart rising out of the ocean," as Surgeon Henry calls it. Blank dismay laid hold of the more sensitive as they gazed at those frowning cliffs. What Napoleon's feelings were we know not. Watchful curiosity seemed to be uppermost; for as they drew near to Jamestown, he minutely scanned the forts through a glass. Arrangements having been made for his reception, he landed in the evening of the 17th October, so as to elude the gaze of the inhabitants, and entered a house prepared for him in the town.

On the morrow he was up at dawn, and rode with Cockburn and Bertrand to Longwood, the residence of the Lieutenant-Governor. The orders of our East India Company, to which the island then belonged, forbade his appropriation of Plantation House, the Governor's residence; and a glance at the accompanying map will show the reason of this prohibition. This house is situated not far from creeks that are completely sheltered from the south-east trade winds, whence escape by boat would be easy; whereas Longwood is nearer the surf-beaten side and offers far more security. After conferring with Governor Wilks and others, Cockburn decided on this residence.

"At Longwood," wrote Cockburn, "an extent of level ground, easily to be secured by sentries, presents itself, perfectly adapted for horse exercise, carriage exercise, or for pleasant walking, which is not to be met with in all the other parts of the island. The house is certainly small; but . . . I trust the carpenters of the 'Northumberland' will in a little time be able to make such additions to the house as will render it, if not as good as might be wished, yet at least as commodious as necessary."[1]

[1] Forsyth, "Captivity of Napoleon," vol. i., p. 218. Plantation House was also the centre of the semaphores of the island.

"Napoleon," wrote Glover, "seemed well satisfied with the situation of Longwood, and expressed a desire to occupy it as soon as possible." As he disliked the publicity of the house in Jamestown, Cockburn suggested on their return that he should reside at a pretty little bungalow, not far from the town, named "The Briars." He readily assented, and took up his abode there for seven weeks, occupying a small adjoining annexe, while Las



Cases and his son established themselves in the two garrets. A marquee was erected to serve as dining-room. It was a narrow space for the lord of the Tuileries, but he seems to have been not unhappy. There he dictated Memoranda to Las Cases or Gourgaud in the mornings, and often joined the neighbouring family of the Balcombes for dinner and the evening. Mr. Balcombe, an elderly merchant, was appointed purveyor to the party; he and his wife were most hospitable, and their two daughters, of fifteen and fourteen years, frequently beguiled Napoleon's evening hours with games of whist or naïve questions. On

one supreme occasion, in order to please the younger girl, Napoleon played at blindman's buff; at such times she ventured to call him "Boney"; and, far from taking offence at this liberty, he delighted in her glee. It is such episodes as these that reveal the softer traits of his character, which the dictates of policy had stunted but not eradicated.[1]

In other respects, the time at "The Briars" was dull and monotonous, and he complained bitterly to Cockburn of the inadequate accommodation. The most exciting times were on the arrival of newspapers from Europe. The reports just to hand of riots in England and royalist excesses in France fed his hopes of general disorders or revolutions which might lead to his recall. He believed the Jacobins would yet lord it over the Continent. "It is only I who can tame them."

Equally noteworthy are his comments on the trials of Labédoyère and Ney for their treason to Louis XVIII. He has little pity for them. "One ought never to break one's word," he remarked to Gourgaud, "and I despise traitors." On hearing that Labédoyère was condemned to death, he at first shows more feeling: but he comes round to the former view: "Labédoyère acted like a man without honour," and "Ney dishonoured himself."[2]

We may hereby gauge the value which Napoleon laid on fidelity. For him it is the one priceless virtue. He esteems those who staunchly oppose him, and seeks to gain them over by generosity: for those who *come over* he ever has a secret contempt; for those who desert him, hatred. Doubtless that is why he heard the news of Ney's execution unmoved. Brilliantly brave as the Marshal was, he had abandoned him in 1814, and Louis XVIII. in the Hundred Days. The tidings of Murat's miserable fate, at the close of his mad expedition to Calabria, leave Napoleon equally cold. — "I announce the fatal news," writes Gourgaud, "to His Majesty, whose expression re-

[1] Mrs. Abell ("Betsy" Balcombe), "Recollections," ch. vii. These were compiled twenty-five years later, and are not, as a rule, trustworthy, but the "blindman's buff" is named by Glover. Balcombe later on infringed the British regulations, along with O'Meara.

[2] Gourgaud, "Journal," vol. i., pp. 77, 94, 136, 491.

mains unchanged, and who says that Murat must have been mad to attempt a venture like that." — Here again his thoughts seem to fly back to Murat's defection in 1814. Later on, he says he loved him for his brilliant bravery, and therefore pardoned his numerous follies. But his present demeanour shows that he never forgave that of 1814.[1]

Meanwhile, thanks to the energy of Cockburn and his sailors, Longwood was ready for the party (December 9th, 1815), and the Admiral hoped that their complaints would cease. The new abode contained five rooms for Napoleon's use, three for the Montholons, two for the Las Cases, and one for Gourgaud: it was situated on a plateau 1,730 feet above the sea: the air there was bracing, and on the farther side of the plain dotted with gum trees stretched the race-course, a mile and a half of excellent turf. The only obvious drawbacks were the occasional mists, and the barren precipitous ravines that flank the plateau on all sides. Seeing, however, that Napoleon disliked the publicity of Jamestown, the isolation of Longwood could hardly be alleged as a serious grievance. The Bertrands occupied Hutt's Gate, a small villa about a mile distant.

The limits within which Napoleon might take exercise unaccompanied by a British officer formed a roughly triangular space having a circumference of about twelve miles. Outside of those bounds he must be so accompanied; and if a strange ship came in sight, he was to return within bounds. The letters of the whole party must be supervised by the acting Governor. This is the gist of the official instructions. Napoleon's dislike of being accompanied by a British officer led him nearly always to restrict himself to the limits and generally to the grounds of Longwood.

And where, we may ask, could a less unpleasant place of detention have been found? In Europe he must inevitably have submitted to far closer confinement. For what safeguards could there have been proof against a subtle intellect and a personality whose charm fired thousands of braves in both hemispheres with the longing to

[1] Gourgaud, "Journal," vol. i., pp. 135, 298. See too "Cornhill" for January, 1901.

LONGWOOD, ST. HELENA. From a sketch by Lieut.-Colonel Basil Jackson.

1 BILLIARD ROOM. 2 DRAWING-ROOM. 3 BEDROOM. 4 BATH-ROOM. 4*a* MARCHAND, VALET.

From Forsyth's "History of the Captivity of Napoleon."

start him once more on his adventures? The Tower of London, the eyrie of Dumbarton Castle, even Fort William itself, were named as possible places of detention. Were they suited to this child of the Mediterranean? He needed sun; he needed exercise; he needed society. All these he could have on the plateau of Longwood, in a singularly equable climate, where the heat of the tropics is assuaged by the south-east trade wind, and plants of the sub-tropical and temperate zones alike flourish.[1]

But nothing pleased the exiles. They moped during the rains; they shuddered at the yawning ravines; they groaned at the sight of the red-coats; above all they realized that escape was hopeless in face of Cockburn's watchful care. His first steps on arriving at the island were to send on to the Cape seventy-five foreigners whose presence was undesirable. He also despatched the "Peruvian" to hoist the British flag on the uninhabited island, Ascension, in order, as he wrote to the Admiralty, "to prevent America or any other nation from planting themselves [*sic*] there . . . for the purpose of favouring sooner or later the escape of General Bonaparte." Four ships of war were also kept at St. Helena, and no merchantmen but those of the East India Company were to touch there except under stress of weather or when in need of water.

These precautions early provoked protests from the exiles. Bertrand had no wish to draw them up in the trenchant style that the ex-Emperor desired; but Gourgaud's "Journal" shows that he was driven on to the task (November 5th). It only led to a lofty rejoinder from Cockburn, in which he declined to relax his system, but expressed the wish to render their situation "as little disagreeable as possible." On December 21st, Montholon

[1] Surgeon Henry of the 66th, in "Events of a Military Life," ch. xxviii., writes that he found side by side at Plantation House the tea shrub and the English golden-pippin, the bread-fruit tree and the peach and plum, the nutmeg overshadowing the gooseberry. In ch. xxxi. he notes the humidity of the uplands as a drawback, "but the inconvenience is as nothing compared with the comfort, fertility, and salubrity which the clouds bestow." He found that the soldiers enjoyed far better health at Deadwood Camp, behind Longwood, than down in Jamestown.

returned to the charge with a letter dictated by Napoleon, complaining that Longwood was the most barren spot on the island, always deluged with rain or swathed in mist; that O'Meara was not to count as a British officer when they went beyond the limits, and had been reprimanded by the Admiral for thus acting; and that the treatment of the exiles would excite the indignation of all times and all people. To this the Admiral sent a crushing rejoinder, declining to explain why he had censured O'Meara or any other British subject: he asserted that Longwood was "the most pleasant as well as the most healthy spot of this most healthful island," expressed the hope that, when the rains had ceased, the party would change their opinion of Longwood, and declared that the treatment of the party would "obtain the admiration of future ages, as well as of every unprejudiced person of the present."

We now know that the Admiral's trust in the judicial impartiality of future ages was a piece of touching credulity, and that the next generation, like his own, was greedily to swallow sensational slander and to neglect the prosaic truth. But, arguing from present signs, he might well believe that Montholon's letter was a tissue of falsehoods; for that officer soon confessed to him that "it was written in a moment of petulance of the General [Bonaparte] . . . and that he [Montholon] considered the party to be in point of fact vastly well off and to have everything necessary for them, though anxious that there should be no restrictions as to the General going unattended by an officer wherever he pleased throughout the island."[1] On the last point Cockburn was inflexible.

The Admiral's responsibility was now nearly at an end. On April 14th, 1816, there landed at St. Helena Sir Hudson Lowe, the new Governor, who was to take over the powers wielded both by Cockburn and Wilks. The new arrival, on whom the storms of calumny were thenceforth persistently to beat, had served with distinction in many parts. Born in 1769, within one month of Napoleon, he early entered our army, and won his commission by service in Corsica and Elba, his linguistic and military gifts soon raising him to the command of a corps of Corsican

[1] Despatch of Jan. 12th, 1816, in Colonial Office, St. Helena, No. 1.

exiles who after 1795 enlisted in our service. With these "Corsican Rangers" Lowe campaigned in Egypt and finally at Capri, their devotion to him nerving them to a gallant but unavailing defence of this islet against a superior force of Murat's troops in 1808.[1] In 1810 Lowe and his Corsicans captured the Isle of Santa Maura, which he thereafter governed to the full satisfaction of the inhabitants. Early in 1813 he was ordered to Russia, and thereafter served as *attaché* on Blücher's staff in the memorable advance to the Rhine and the Seine. He brought the news of Napoleon's first abdication to England, was knighted by the Prince Regent, and received Russian and Prussian orders of distinction for his services. At the close of 1814 he was appointed Quartermaster-General of our forces in the Netherlands and received flattering letters of congratulation from Blücher and Gneisenau, the latter expressing his appreciation of "Your rare military talents, your profound judgment on the great operations of war, and your imperturbable *sang froid* in the day of battle. These rare qualities and your honourable character will link me to you eternally." In 1822, when O'Meara was slandering Lowe's character, the Czar Alexander met his step-daughter, the Countess Balmain, at Verona, and in reference to Sir Hudson's painful duties at St. Helena, said of him: "Je l'estime beaucoup. Je l'ai connu dans les temps critiques."[2]

Lowe's firmness of character, command of foreign languages, and intimate acquaintance with Corsicans, seemed to mark him out as the ideal Governor of St. Helena in place of the mild and scholarly Wilks. And yet the appointment was in some ways unfortunate. Though a man of sterling worth, Lowe was reserved, and had little acquaintance with the ways of courtiers. Moreover, the superstitious might deem that all the salient events of his career proclaimed him an evil genius dogging the steps of Napoleon; and, as superstition laid increasing hold on the

[1] Lord Rosebery ("Napoleon: last Phase," p. 67), following French sources, assigns the superiority of force to Lowe; but the official papers published by Forsyth, vol. i., pp. 397–416, show that the reverse was the case. Lowe had 1,362 men; the French, about 3,000.

[2] From a letter in the possession of Miss Lowe.

great Corsican in his later years, we may reasonably infer that this feeling intensified, if it did not create, the repugnance which he ever manifested to *la figure sinistre* of the Governor. Lowe also at first shrank from an appointment that must bring on him the intrigues of Napoleon and of his partisans in England. Only a man of high rank and commanding influence could hope to live down such attacks ; and Lowe had neither rank nor influence. He was the son of an army surgeon, and was almost unknown in the country which for twenty-eight years he had served abroad.

His first visits to Longwood were unfortunate. Cockburn and he arranged to go at 9 A.M., the time when Napoleon frequently went for a drive. On their arrival they were informed that the Emperor was indisposed and could not see them until 4 P.M. of the next day, and it soon appeared that the early hour of their call was taken as an act of rudeness. On the following afternoon Lowe and Cockburn arranged to go in together to the presence ; but as Lowe advanced to the chamber, Bertrand stepped forward, and a valet prevented the Admiral's entrance, an act of incivility which Lowe did not observe. Proceeding alone, the new Governor offered his respects in French ; but on Napoleon remarking that he must know Italian, for he had commanded a regiment of Corsicans, they conversed in Napoleon's mother-tongue. The ex-Emperor's first serious observation, which bore on the character of the Corsicans, was accompanied by a quick searching glance : "They carry the stiletto : are they not a bad people ?" — Lowe saw the snare and evaded it by the reply : "They do not carry the stiletto, having abandoned that custom in our service : I was very well satisfied with them." They then conversed a short time about Egypt and other topics. Napoleon afterwards contrasted him favourably with Cockburn : "This new Governor is a man of very few words, but he appears to be a polite man : however, it is only from a man's conduct for some time that you can judge of him."[1]

Cockburn was indignant at the slight put upon him by Napoleon and Bertrand, which succeeded owing to Lowe's

[1] Forsyth, vol. i., pp. 139–147.

want of ready perception; but he knew that the cause of the exiles' annoyance was his recent firm refusal to convey Napoleon's letter of complaint direct to the Prince Regent, without the knowledge of the Ministry. Failing to bend the Admiral, they then sought to cajole the retiring Governor, Wilks, who, having borne little of the responsibility of the custody, was proportionately better liked. First Bertrand, and then Napoleon, requested him to take this letter *without the knowledge of the new Governor*. Wilks at once repelled the request, remarking to Bertrand that such attempts at evasion must lead to greater stringency in the future. And this was the case.[1] The incident naturally increased Lowe's suspicion of the ex-Emperor.

At first there was an uneasy truce between them. Gourgaud, though cast down at the departure of the "adorable" Miss Wilks, found strength enough to chronicle in his "Journal" the results of a visit paid by Las Cases to Lowe at Plantation House (April 26th): the Governor received the secretary very well and put all his library at the disposal of the party; but the diarist also notes that Napoleon took amiss the reception of any of his people by the Governor. This had been one of the unconscious crimes of the Admiral. With the hope of brightening the sojourn of the exiles, he had given several balls, at which Mmes. Bertrand and Montholon shone resplendent in dresses that cast into the shade those of the officers' wives. Their triumph was short-lived. When *la grande Maréchale* ventured to desert the Emperor's table on these and other festive occasions, her growing fondness for the English drew on her sharp rebukes from the ex-Emperor and a request not to treat Longwood as if it were an inn.[2] Many jottings in Gourgaud's diary show that the same policy was thenceforth strictly maintained. Napoleon kept up the essentials of Tuileries etiquette, required the attendance of his courtiers, and jealously checked any familiarity with Plantation House or Jamestown.

On some questions Lowe was more pliable than the home Government, notably in the matter of the declara-

[1] See the interview in "Monthly Rev.," Jan., 1901.

[2] Bingham's Diary in "Cornhill" for Jan., 1901; Gourgaud, vol. i., pp. 152, 168.

tions signed by Napoleon's followers. But in one matter he was proof against all requests from Longwood: this was the extension of the twelve-mile limit. It afterwards became the custom to speak as if Lowe could have granted this. Even the Duke of Wellington declared to Stanhope that he considered Lowe a stupid man, suspicious and jealous, who might very well have let Napoleon go freely about the island provided that the six or seven landing-places were well guarded and that Napoleon showed himself to a British officer every night and morning. Now, it is futile to discuss whether such liberty would have enabled Napoleon to pass off as someone else and so escape. What is certain is that our Government, believing he could so escape, *imposed rules which Lowe was not free to relax.*

Napoleon realized this perfectly well, but in the interview of April 30th, 1816, he pressed Lowe for an extension of the limits, saying that he hated the sight of our soldiers and longed for closer intercourse with the inhabitants. Other causes of friction occurred, such as Lowe's withdrawal of the privilege, rather laxly granted by Cockburn to Bertrand, of granting passes for interviews with Napoleon; or again a tactless invitation that Lowe sent to "General Bonaparte" to meet the wife of the Governor-General of India at dinner at Plantation House. But in the midst of the diatribe which Napoleon shortly afterwards shot forth at his would-be host — a diatribe besprinkled with taunts that Lowe was sent to be his *executioner* — there came a sentence which reveals the cause of his fury: "If you cannot extend my limits, you can do nothing for me."[1]

Why this wish for wider limits? It did not spring from a desire for longer drives; for the plateau offered nearly all the best ground in the island for such exercise. Neither was it due to a craving for wider social intercourse. There can be little doubt that he looked on an extension of limits as a necessary prelude to attempts at escape and as a means of influencing the slaves at the outlying plantations. Gourgaud names several instances of gold pieces being given to slaves, and records the glee shown by his master on once slipping away from the sentries and the

[1] Forsyth, vol. i., pp. 171–177.

British officer. These feelings and attempts were perfectly natural on Napoleon's part; but it was equally natural that the Governor should regard them as part of a plan of escape or rescue — a matter that will engage our closer attention presently.

Napoleon had only two more interviews with Lowe, namely, on July 17th and August 18th. In the former of these he was more conciliatory; but in the latter, at which Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm was present, he assailed the Governor with the bitterest taunts. Lowe cut short the painful scene by saying: "You make me smile, sir." "How smile, sir?" "You force me to smile: your misconception of my character and the rudeness of your manners excite my pity. I wish you good day." The Admiral also retired.[1]

Various causes have been assigned for the hatred that Napoleon felt for Lowe. His frequent taunts that he was no general, but only a leader of Corsican deserters, suggests one that has already been referred to. It has also been suggested that Lowe was not a gentleman, and references have been approvingly made to comparisons of his physiognomy with that of the devil, and of his eye with "that of a hyæna caught in a trap." As to this we will cite the opinion of Lieutenant (later Colonel) Basil Jackson, who was unknown to Lowe before 1816, and was on friendly terms with the inmates both of Longwood and of Plantation House:

"He [Lowe] stood five feet seven, spare in make, having good features, fair hair, and eyebrows overhanging his eyes: his look denoted penetration and firmness, his manner rather abrupt, his gait quick, his look and general demeanour indicative of energy and decision. He wrote or dictated rapidly, and was fond of writing, was well read in military history, spoke French and Italian with fluency, was warm and steady in his friendships, and popular both with the inhabitants of the isle and the troops. His portrait, prefixed to Mr. Forsyth's book, is a perfect likeness." [2]

[1] Lowe's version (Forsyth, vol. i., pp. 247–251) is fully borne out by Admiral Malcolm's in Lady Malcolm's "Diary of St. Helena," pp. 55–65; Gourgaud was not present.

[2] B. Jackson's "Waterloo and St. Helena," pp. 90–91. The assertion in the article on B. Jackson, in the "Dict. of Nat. Biography," that he was related to Lowe, and therefore partial to him, is incorrect. Miss Lowe assures me that he did not see her father before the St. Helena days.

If overhanging eyebrows, a penetrating glance, and rather abrupt manners be thought to justify comparisons with the devil or a hyæna, the art of historical portraiture will assuredly have to be learnt over again in conformity with impressionist methods. That Lowe was a gentleman is affirmed by Mrs. Smith (*née* Grant), who, in later years, *when prejudiced against him by O'Meara's slanders*, met him at Colombo without at first knowing his name:

"I was taken in to dinner by a grave, particularly gentlemanly man, in a General's uniform, whose conversation was as agreeable as his manner. He had been over half the world, knew all celebrities, and contrived without display to say a great deal one was willing to hear. . . . Years before, with our Whig principles and prejudices, we had cultivated in our Highland retirement a horror of the great Napoleon's gaoler. The cry of party, the feeling for the prisoner, the book of Surgeon O'Meara, had all worked my woman's heart to such a pitch of indignation that this maligned name [Lowe] was an offence. We were to hold the owner in abhorrence. Speak to him never! Look at him, sit in the same room with him, never! None were louder than I, more vehement; yet here was I beside my bugbear and perfectly satisfied with my position. It was a good lesson."[1]

The real cause of Napoleon's hatred of Lowe is hinted at by Sir George Bingham in his diary (April 19th). After mentioning Napoleon's rudeness to Cockburn on parting with him, he proceeds:

"You have no idea of the dirty little intrigues of himself [Napoleon] and his set: if Sir H. Lowe has firmness enough not to give way to them, he will in a short time treat him in the same manner. For myself, it is said I am a favourite [of Napoleon], though I do not understand the claim I have to such."[2]

Yes! Lowe's offence lay not in his manners, not even in his features, but in his firmness. Napoleon soon saw that all his efforts to bend him were in vain. Neither in regard to the Imperial title, nor the limits, nor the trans-

[1] "Mems. of a Highland Lady," p. 459.

[2] In "Blackwood's," Oct., 1896, and "Cornhill," Jan., 1901. I cannot accept Stürmer's hostile verdict on Lowe as that of an impartial witness. The St. Helena Records show that Stürmer persisted in evading the Governor's regulations by secretly meeting the French Generals. He was afterwards recalled for his irregularities. Balmain, the Russian, and Montchenu, the French Commissioner, are fair to him. The latter constantly pressed Lowe *to be stricter with Napoleon!* See M. Firmin-Didot's edition of Montchenu's reports in "La Captivité de Ste. Hélène," especially App. iii. and viii.

mission of letters to Europe, would the Governor swerve a hair's breadth from his instructions. At the risk of giving a surfeit of quotations, we must cite two more on this topic. Basil Jackson, when at Paris in 1828, chanced to meet Montholon, and was invited to his Château de Frémigny; during his stay the conversation turned upon their sojourn at St. Helena, to the following effect:

"He [Montholon] enlarged upon what he termed *la politique de Longwood*, spoke not unkindly of Sir Hudson Lowe, allowing he had a difficult task to execute, since an angel from Heaven, as Governor, could not have pleased them. When I more than hinted that nothing could justify detraction and departure from truth in carrying out a policy, he merely shrugged his shoulders and reiterated: '*C'était notre politique; et que voulez-vous?*' That he and the others respected Sir Hudson Lowe, I had not the shadow of a doubt: nay, in a conversation with Montholon at St. Helena, when speaking of the Governor, he observed that Sir Hudson was an officer who would always have distinguished employment, as all Governments were glad of the services of a man of his calibre.

"Happening to mention that, owing to his inability to find an officer who could understand and speak French, the Governor was disposed to employ me as orderly officer at Longwood, Montholon said it was well for me that I was not appointed to the post, as they did not want a person in that capacity who could understand them; in fact, he said, we should have found means to get rid of you, and perhaps ruined you."[1]

Las Cases also, *in a passage that he found it desirable to suppress when he published his "Journal,"* wrote as follows (November 30th, 1815):

"We are possessed of moral arms only: and in order to make the most advantageous use of these it was necessary to reduce into *a system* our demeanour, our words, our sentiments, *even our privations*, in order that we might thereby excite a lively interest in a large portion of the population of Europe, and that the Opposition in England might not fail to attack the Ministry on the violence of their conduct towards us."[2]

We are now able to understand the real nature of the struggle that went on between Longwood and Plantation House. Napoleon and his followers sought by every

[1] "Waterloo and St. Helena," p. 104.

[2] Lowe had the "Journal" copied out when it came into his hands in Dec., 1816. This passage is given by Forsyth, vol. i., p. 5, and by Seaton, "Sir H. Lowe and Napoleon," p. 52.

means to bring odium upon Lowe, and to furnish the Opposition at Westminster with toothsome details that might lead to the disgrace of the Governor, the overthrow of the Ministry, and the triumphant release of the ex-Emperor. On the other hand, the knowledge of the presence of traitors on the island, and of possible rescuers hovering about on the horizon, kept Lowe ever at work "unravelling the intricate plotting constantly going on at Longwood," until his face wore the preoccupied worried look that Surgeon Henry describes.

That both antagonists somewhat overacted their parts does not surprise us when we think of the five years thus spent within a narrow space and under a tropical sun. Lowe was at times pedantic: witness his refusal to forward to Longwood books inscribed to the "Emperor Napoleon," and his suspicions as to the political significance of green and white beans offered by Montholon to the French Commissioner, Montchenu. But such incidents can be paralleled from the lives of most officials who bear a heavy burden of responsibility. And who has ever borne a heavier burden?[1]

Napoleon also, in his calmer moods, regretted the violence of his language to the Governor. He remarked to Montholon: "This is the second time in my life that I have spoilt my affairs with the English. Their phlegm leads me on, and I say more than I ought. I should have done better not to have replied to him." This reference to his attack on Whitworth in 1803 flashes a ray of light on the diatribe against Lowe. In both cases, doubtless, the hot southron would have bridled his passion sooner, had it produced any visible effect on the colder man of the north. Nevertheless, the scene of August 18th, 1816,

[1] An incident narrated to the present writer by Sir Hudson Lowe's daughter will serve to show how anxious was his supervision of all details and all individuals on the island. A British soldier was missed from the garrison; and as this occurred at the time when Napoleon remained in strict seclusion, fear was felt that treachery had enabled him to make off in the soldier's uniform. The mystery was solved a few days after, when a large shark was caught near the shore, and on its being cut open the remains of the soldier were found!

It should be remembered that Lowe prevailed on the slave-owners of the island to set free the children of slaves born there on and after Christmas Day, 1818.

had an abiding influence on his relations with the Governor. For the rest of that weary span of years they never exchanged a word.

Lowe's official reports prove that he did not cease to consult the comfort of the exiles as far as it was possible. The building of the new house, however, remained in abeyance, as Napoleon refused to give any directions on the subject: and the much-needed repairs to Longwood were stopped owing to his complaints of the noise of the workmen. But by ordering the claret that the ex-Emperor preferred, and by sending occasional presents of game to Longwood, Lowe sought to keep up the ordinary civilities of life; and when the home Government sought to limit the annual cost of the Longwood household to £8,000, Lowe took upon himself to increase that sum by one half.

Napoleon's behaviour in this last affair is noteworthy. On hearing of the need for greater economy, he readily assented, sent away seven servants, and ordered a reduction in the consumption of wine. A day or two later, however, he gave orders that some of his silver plate should be sold in order "to provide those little comforts denied them." Balcombe was accordingly sent for, and, on expressing regret to Napoleon at the order for sale, received the reply: "*What is the use of plate when you have nothing to eat off it?*" Lowe quietly directed Balcombe to seal up the plate sent to him, and to advance money up to its value (£250); but other portions of the plate were broken and sold later on. O'Meara reveals the reason for these proceedings in his letter of October 10th: "In this he [Napoleon] has also a wish to excite odium against the Governor by saying that he has been obliged to sell his plate in order to provide against starvation, *as he himself told me was his object.*"[1]

[1] Quoted by Forsyth, vol. i., p. 289. This letter of course finds no place in O'Meara's later malicious production, "A Voice from St. Helena"; the starvation story is there repeated *as if it were true!*—That Napoleon was fastidious to the last is proved by the archives of our India Office, which contain the entry (Dec. 11th, 1820): "The storekeeper paid in the sum of £105 on account of 48 dozen of champagne rejected by General Bonaparte" (Sir G. Birdwood's "Report on the Old Records of the India Office," p. 97).

Another incident that embittered the relations between Napoleon and the Governor was the arrival from England of more stringent regulations for his custody. The chief changes thus brought about (October 9th, 1816) were a restriction of the limits from a twelve-mile to an eight-mile circumference and the posting of a ring of sentries at a slight distance from Longwood at sunset instead of at 9 P.M.[1] The latter change is to be regretted; for it marred the pleasure of Napoleon's evening strolls in his garden; but, as the Governor pointed out, the three hours after sunset had been the easiest time for escape. The restriction of limits was needful, not only in order to save our troops the labour of watching a wide area that was scarcely ever used for exercise, but also to prevent underhand intercourse with slaves.

Was there really any need for these "nation-degrading" rules, as O'Meara called them? Or were they imposed in order to insult the great man? A reference to the British archives will show that there was some reason for them. Schemes of rescue were afoot that called for the greatest vigilance.

As we have seen (page 485, note), a letter had on August 2nd, 1815, been directed to Mme. Bertrand (really for Napoleon) at Plymouth, stating that the writer had placed sums of money with well-known firms of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charlestown on his behalf, and that he (Napoleon) had only to make known his wishes "*avec le thé de la Chine ou les mousselines de l'Inde*": for the rest, the writer hoped much from English merchantmen. This letter, after wide wanderings, fell into our hands and caused our Government closely to inspect all letters and merchandise that passed into, or out of, St. Helena. Its attention was directed specially to the United States. There the Napoleonic cult had early taken root, thanks to his overthrow of the kings and his easy sale of Louisiana; the glorifying haze of distance fostered its growth; and now the martyrdom of St. Helena brought it to full maturity. Enthusiasm and money alike favoured schemes of rescue.

In our St. Helena Records (No. 4) are reports as to

[1] Forsyth, vol. i., pp. 330–343, 466–475.

two of them. Forwarded by the Spanish Ambassador at Washington, the first reached Madrid on May 9th, 1816, and stated that a man named Carpenter had offered to Joseph Bonaparte (then in the States) to rescue Napoleon, and had set sail on a ship for that purpose. This was at once made known to Lord Bathurst, our Minister for War and the Plantations, who forwarded it to Lowe. In August of that year our Foreign Office also received news that four schooners and other smaller vessels had set sail from Baltimore on June 14th with 300 men under an old French naval officer, named Fournier, ostensibly to help Bolivar, but really to rescue Bonaparte. These fast-sailing craft were to lie out of sight of the island by day, creep up at night to different points, and send boats to shore; from each of these a man, *in English uniform*, was to land and proceed to Longwood, warning Napoleon of the points where the boats would be ready to receive him. The report concludes: "Considerable sums in gold and diamonds will be put at his disposal to bribe those who may be necessary to him. They seem to flatter themselves of a certain co-operation on the part of certain individuals domiciled or employed at St. Helena."[1]

Bathurst sent on to Lowe a copy of this intelligence. Forsyth does not name the affair, though he refers to other warnings, received at various times by Bathurst and forwarded to the Governor, that there were traitors in the island who had been won over by Napoleon's gold to aid his escape.[2] I cannot find out that the plans described above were put to the test, though suspicious vessels sometimes appeared and were chased away by our

[1] I have quoted this *in extenso* in "The Owens College Historical Essays." May not the words "domiciled" and "employed" have aroused Lowe's suspicions of Balcombe and O'Meara? Napoleon always said that he did not wish to escape, and hoped only for a change of Ministry in England. But what responsible person could trust his words after Elba, where he repeatedly told Campbell that he had done with the world and was a dead man?

[2] Forsyth, vol. i., p. 310, vol. ii., p. 142, vol. iii., pp. 151, 250; Montholon, "Captivity of Napoleon," vol. iii., ch. v.; Firmin-Didot, App. vi. The schemes named by Forsyth are ridiculed by Lord Rosebery ("Last Phase," p. 103). But would he have ignored them, had he been in Bathurst's place?

cruisers. But when we are considering the question whether Bathurst and Lowe were needlessly strict or not, the point at issue is *whether plans of escape or rescue existed, and if so, whether they knew of them.* As to this there cannot be the shadow of doubt; and it is practically certain that they were the cause of the new regulations of October 9th, 1816.

We have now traced the course of events during the first critical twelvemonth; we have seen how friction burst into a flame, how the chafing of that masterful spirit against all restraint served but to tighten the inclosing grasp, and how the attempts of his misguided friends in America and Europe changed a fairly lax detention into actual custody. It is a vain thing to toy with the "might-have-beens" of history; but we can fancy a man less untamable than Napoleon frankly recognizing that he had done with active life by assuming a feigned name (*e.g.*, that of Colonel Muiron, which he once thought of) and settling down in that equable retreat to the congenial task of compiling his personal and military Memoirs. If he ever intended to live as a country squire in England, there were equal facilities for such a life in St. Helena, with no temptations to stray back into politics. The climate was better for him than that of England, and the possibilities for exercise greater than could there have been allowed. Books there were in abundance — 2,700 of them at last: he had back files of the "Moniteur" for his writings, and copies of "The Times" came regularly from Plantation House: a piano had been bought in England for £120. Finally there were the six courtiers whose jealous devotion, varying moods, and frequent quarrels furnished a daily comedietta that still charms posterity.

What then was wanting? Unfortunately everything was wanting. He cared not for music, or animals, or, in recent years, for the chase. He himself divulged the secret, in words uttered to Gallois in the days of his power: "*Je n'aime pas beaucoup les femmes, ni le jeu — enfin rien: je suis tout à fait un être politique.*" — He never ceased to love politics and power. At St. Helena he pictured himself as winning over the English, had he

settled there. Ah! if I were in England, he said, I should have conquered all hearts.[1] And assuredly he would have done so. How could men so commonplace as the Prince Regent, Liverpool, Castlereagh, and Bathurst have made head against the influence of a truly great and enthralling personality? Or if he had gone to the United States, who would have competed with him for the Presidency?

As it was, he chose to remain indoors, in order to figure as the prisoner of Longwood,[2] and spent his time between intrigues against Lowe and dictation of Memoirs. On the subject of Napoleon's writings we cannot here enter, save to say that his critiques of Cæsar, Turenne, and Frederick the Great are of great interest and value; that the records of his own campaigns, though highly suggestive, need to be closely checked by the original documents, seeing that he had not all the needful facts and figures at hand; and that his record of political events is in the main untrustworthy: it is an elaborate device for enhancing the Napoleonic tradition and assuring the crown to the King of Rome.

We turn, then, to take a brief glance at his last years. The first event that claims notice is the arrest of Las Cases. This subtle intriguer had soon earned the hatred of Montholon and Gourgaud, who detested "the little Jesuit" for his Malvolio-like airs of importance and the hints of Napoleon that he would have ceremonial precedence over them. His rapid rise into favour was due to his conversational gifts, literary ability, and thorough knowledge of the English people and language. This last was specially important. Napoleon very much wished to learn our language, as he hoped that any mail might bring news of the triumph of the Whigs and an order for his own departure for England. His studies with Las Cases were more persevering than successful, as will be seen from the following curious letter, written apparently in the watches of the night: it has been recently published by M. de Brotonne.

[1] Gourgaud, "Journal," vol. i., p. 105.

[2] He said to Gourgaud that *if he had the whole island for exercise he would not go out* (Gourgaud's "Journal," vol. ii., p. 299).

"COUNT LASCASES,

"Since sixt week y learn the English and y do not any progress. Sixt week do fourty and two day. If might have learn fivty word, for day, i could know it two thousands and two hundred. It is in the dictionary more of fourty thousand: even he could most twenty; bot much of tems. For know it or hundred and twenty week, which do more two years. After this you shall agree that the study one tongue is a great labour who it must do into the young aged."

How much farther Napoleon progressed in his efforts to absorb our language by these mathematical methods we do not know; for no other English letter of his seems to be extant. The arrest and departure of his tutor soon occurred, and there are good grounds for assigning this ultimately to the jealousy of the less cultured Generals. Thus, we find Gourgaud asserting that Las Cases has come to St. Helena solely "in order to get talked about, write anecdotes, and make money." Montholon also did his best to render the secretary's life miserable, and on one occasion predicted to Gourgaud that Las Cases would soon leave the island.[1]

The forecast speedily came true. The secretary intrusted to his servant, a dubious mulatto named Scott, two letters for Europe sewn up in a waistcoat: one of them was a long letter to Lucien Bonaparte. The servant showed the letters to his father, who in some alarm revealed the matter to the Governor. It is curious as illustrating the state of suspicion then prevalent at St. Helena, that Las Cases accused the Scotts of being tools of the Governor; that Lowe saw in the affair the frayed end of a Longwood scheme; while the residents there suspected Las Cases of arranging matters as a means of departure from the island. There was much to justify this last surmise. Las Cases and his son were unwell; their position in the household was very uncomfortable; and for a skilled intriguer to intrust an important letter to a slave, who was already in the Governor's black books, was truly a singular proceeding. Besides, after the

[1] Gourgaud's "Journal," vol. i., pp. 262–270, 316. Yet Montholon ("Captivity of Napoleon," vol. i., ch. xiii.) afterwards wrote of Las Cases' departure: "*We all loved the well-informed and good man, whom we had pleasure in venerating as a Mentor. . . . He was an immense loss to us!*"

arrest, when the Governor searched Las Cases' papers in his presence, they were found to be in good order, among them being parts of his "Journal." Napoleon himself thought Las Cases guilty of a piece of extraordinary folly, though he soon sought to make capital out of the arrest by comparing the behaviour of our officers and their orderlies with "South Sea savages dancing around a prisoner that they are about to devour."[1] After a short detention at Ross Cottage, *when he declined the Governor's offer that he should return to Longwood*, the secretary was sent to the Cape, and thence made his way to France, where a judicious editing of his "Memoirs" and "Journal" gained for their compiler a rich reward.

Gourgaud is the next to leave. The sensitive young man has long been tormented by jealousy. His diary becomes the long-drawn sigh of a generous but vain nature, when soured by real or fancied neglect. Though often unfair to Napoleon, whose egotism the slighted devotee often magnifies into colossal proportions, the writer unconsciously bears witness to the wondrous fascination that held the little Court in awe. The least attention shown to the Montholons costs "Gogo" a fit of spleen or a sleepless night, scarcely to be atoned for on the morrow by soothing words, by chess, or reversi, or help at the manuscript of "Waterloo." Again and again Napoleon tries to prove to him that the Montholons ought to have precedence: it is in vain. At last the crisis comes: it is four years since the General saved the Emperor from a Cossack's lance at Brienne, and the recollection renders his present "humiliations" intolerable. He challenges Montholon to a duel; Napoleon strictly forbids it; and the aggrieved officer seeks permission to depart.

Napoleon grants his request. It seems that the chief is weary of his moody humours; he further owes him a grudge for writing home to his mother frank statements of the way in which the Longwood exiles are treated.

[1] Gourgaud, vol. i., p. 278; Forsyth, vol. i., pp. 381–384, vol. ii., p. 74. Bonaparte wanted this "Journal" to be given back to him: but Las Cases would not hear of this, as it contained "*ses pensées*." It was kept under seal until Napoleon's death, and then restored to the compiler.

These letters were read by Lowe and Bathurst, and their general purport seems to have been known in French governmental circles, where they served as an antidote to the poisonous stories circulated by Napoleon and his more diplomatic followers. Clearly nothing is to be made of Gourgaud; and so he departs (February 13th, 1818). Bidding a tearful adieu, he goes with Basil Jackson to spend six weeks with him at a cottage near Plantation House, when he is astonished at the delicate reserve shown by the Governor. He then sets sail for England. The only money he has is £100 advanced by Lowe. Napoleon's money he has refused to accept.[1]

And yet he did not pass out of his master's life. Landing in England on May 1st, he had a few interviews with our officials, in which he warned them that Napoleon's escape would be quite easy, and gave a hint as to O'Meara being the tool of Napoleon. But soon the young General came into touch with the leaders of the Opposition. No change in his sentiments is traceable until August 25th, when he indited a letter to Marie Louise, asserting that Napoleon was dying "in the torments of the longest and most frightful agony," a prey to the cruelty of England! To what are we to attribute this change of front? The editors of Gourgaud's "Journal" maintain that there was no change; they hint that the "Journal" may have been an elaborate device for throwing dust into Lowe's eyes; and they point to the fact that before leaving the island Gourgaud received secret instructions from Napoleon bidding him convey to Europe several small letters sewn into the soles of his boots. Whether he acted on these instructions may be doubted; for at his departure he gave his word of honour to Lowe that he was not the bearer of any paper, pamphlet, or letter from Longwood. Furthermore, we hear nothing of these secret letters afterwards; and he allowed nearly four months to elapse in England before he wrote to Marie Louise. The theory referred to above seems quite untenable in face of these facts.[2]

How, then, are we to explain Gourgaud's conduct at

[1] Henry, vol. ii., p. 48; B. Jackson, pp. 99–101; quoted by Seaton, pp. 159–162.

[2] Forsyth, vol. iii., p. 40; Gourgaud's "Journal," vol. ii., pp. 531–537.

St. Helena and afterwards? Now, in threading the mendacious labyrinths of St. Helena literature it is hard ever to find a wholly satisfactory clue; but Basil Jackson's "Waterloo and St. Helena" (p. 103) seems to supply it in the following passage:

"To finish about Gourgaud, I may add that on his reaching England, after one or two interviews with the Under-Secretary of State, he fell into the hands of certain Radicals of note, who represented to him the folly of his conduct in turning against Napoleon; that, as his adherent, he was really somebody, whereas he was only ruining himself by appearing inimical. In short, they so worked upon the poor weak man, that he was induced to try and make it appear that he was still *l'homme de l'Empereur;* this he did by inditing a letter to Marie Louise, in which he inveighed against the treatment of Napoleon at the hands of the Government and Sir H. Lowe, which being duly published, Gourgaud fell to zero in the opinion of all right-minded persons."

This seems consonant with what we know of Gourgaud's character: frank, volatile, and sensitive, he could never have long sustained a policy of literary and diplomatic deceit. He was not a compound of Chatterton and Fouché. His "Journal" is the artless outpouring of wounded vanity and brings us close to the heart of the hero-worshipper and his hero. At times the idol falls and is shivered, but love places it on the shrine again and again, until the fourth anniversary of Brienne finds the spell broken. Even before he leaves St. Helena the old fascination is upon him once more; and then Napoleon seeks to utilize his devotion for the purpose of a political mission. Gourgaud declines the *rôle* of agent, pledges his word to the Governor, and keeps it; but, thanks to British officialism or the seductions of the Opposition, hero-worship once more gains the day and enrolls him beside Las Cases and Montholon. This we believe to be the real Gourgaud, a genuine, lovable, but flighty being, as every page of his "Journal" shows.

One cannot but notice in passing the extraordinary richness of St. Helena literature. Nearly all the exiles kept diaries or memoirs, or wrote them when they returned to Europe. And, on the other hand, of all the 10,000 Britons whom Napoleon detained in France for eleven years, not one has left a record that is ever read to-day.

Consequently, while the woes of Napoleon have been set forth in every civilized tongue, the world has forgotten the miseries causelessly inflicted on 10,000 English families. The advantages possessed by a memoir-writing nation over one that is but half articulate could not be better illustrated. For the dumb Britons not a single tear is ever shed ; whereas the voluble inmates of Longwood used their pens to such effect that half the world still believes them to have been bullied twice a week by Lowe, plied with gifts of poisoned coffee, and nearly eaten up by rats at night. On this last topic we are treated to tales of part of a slave's leg being eaten off while he slept at Longwood — nay, of a horse's leg being also gnawed away at night — so that our feelings are divided between pity for the sufferers and envy at the soundness of their slumbers.

Longwood was certainly far from being a suitable abode ; but a word from Napoleon would have led to the erection of the new house on a site that he chose to indicate. The materials had all been brought from England; but the word was not spoken until a much later time ; and the inference is inevitable that he preferred to remain where he was so that he could represent himself as lodged in *cette grange insalubre.*[1]

The third of the Longwood household to depart was the surgeon, O'Meara. The conduct of this British officer in facilitating Napoleon's secret correspondence has been so fully exposed by Forsyth and Seaton that we may refer our readers to their works for proofs of his treachery. Gourgaud's "Journal" reveals the secret influence that seduced him. Chancing once to refer to the power of money over Englishmen, Napoleon remarked that that was why we did not want him to draw sums from Europe, and continued : "*Le docteur n'est si bien pour moi que depuis que je lui donne mon argent. Ah ! j'en suis bien sûr, de celui-là !*"[2] This disclosure enables us to

[1] "Apostille" of April 27th, 1818. As to the new house, see Forsyth, vol. i., pp. 212, 270 ; vol. iii., pp. 51, 257 ; it was ready when Napoleon's illness became severe (Jan., 1821).

If the plague of rats was really very bad, why is it that Gourgaud made so little of it ?

[2] "Journal" of Oct. 4th, 1817. On the return voyage to England Mme. Bertrand told Surgeon Henry that secret letters had constantly

understand why the surgeon, after being found out and dismissed from the service, sought to blacken the character of Sir Hudson Lowe by every conceivable device. The wonder is that he succeeded in imposing his version of facts on a whole generation.

The next physician who resided at Longwood, Dr. Stokoe, was speedily cajoled into disobeying the British regulations and underwent official disgrace. An attempt was then made, through Montholon, to bribe his successor, Dr. Verling, who indignantly repelled it and withdrew from his duty.[1]

There can be no doubt that Napoleon found pleasure in these intrigues. In his last interview with Stürmer, the Austrian Commissioner at St. Helena, Gourgaud said, in reference to this topic : "However unhappy he [Napoleon] is here, he secretly enjoys the importance attached to his custody, the interest that the Powers take in it, and the care taken to collect his least words." Napoleon also once remarked to Gourgaud that it was better to be at St. Helena than as he was at Elba.[2] Of the same general tenour are his striking remarks, reported by Las Cases at the close of his first volume :

"Our situation here may even have its attractions. The universe is looking at us. We remain the martyrs of an immortal cause: millions of men weep for us, the fatherland sighs, and Glory is in mourning. We struggle here against the oppression of the gods, and the longings of the nations are for us. . . . Adversity was wanting to my career. If I had died on the throne amidst the clouds of my omnipotence, I should have remained a problem for many men: to-day, thanks to misfortune, they can judge of me naked as I am."

In terseness of phrase, vividness of fancy, and keenness of insight into the motives that sway mankind, this passage is worthy of Napoleon. He knew that his exile at St. Helena would dull the memory of the wrongs which he had done to the cause of liberty, and that from that lonely peak would go forth the legend of the new Prometheus chained to the rock by the kings and torn every

passed between Longwood and England, through two military officers; but the passage above quoted shows who was the culprit.

[1] Forsyth, vol. iii., pp. 153, 178–181.

[2] Stürmer's "Report" of March 14th, 1818; Gourgaud's "Journal" of Sept. 11th and 14th, 1817.

day by the ravening vulture. The world had rejected his gospel of force; but would it not thrill responsive to the gospel of pity now to be enlisted in his behalf? His surmise was amazingly true. The world was thrilled. The story worked wonders, not directly for him, but for his fame and his dynasty. The fortunes of his race began to revive from the time when the popular imagination transfigured Napoleon the Conqueror into Napoleon the Martyr. Viewed in this light, and thrown up into telling relief against the sinister policy of the Holy Alliance of the monarchs, the dreary years spent at St. Helena were not the least successful of his career. Without them there could have been no second Napoleonic Empire.

Not that his life there was a "long-drawn agony." His health was fairly good. There were seasons of something like enjoyment, when he gave himself up to outdoor recreations. Such a time was the latter part of 1819 and the first half of 1820: we may call it the Indian summer of his life, for he was then possessed with a passion for gardening. Lightly clad and protected by a broad-brimmed hat, he went about, sometimes spade in hand, superintending various changes in the grounds at Longwood and around the new house which was being erected for him hard by. Or at other times he used the opportunity afforded by the excavations to show how infantry might be so disposed on a hastily raised slope as to bring a terrific fire to bear on attacking cavalry. Marshalling his followers at dawn by the sound of a bell, he made them all, counts, valets, and servants, dig trenches as if for the front ranks, and throw up the earth for the rear ranks: then, taking his stand in front, as the shortest man, and placing the tallest at the rear (his Swiss valet, Noverraz), he triumphantly showed how the horsemen might be laid low by the rolling volleys of ten ranks.[1] In May or June he took once more to horse exercise, and for a time his health benefited from all this activity. His relations with the Governor were peaceful, if not cordial, and the limits were about this time extended.

Indoors there were recreations other than work at the

[1] Described by Bertrand to Lowe on May 12th, 1821 ("St. Helena Records," No. 32.)

Memoirs. He often played chess and billiards, at the latter using his hand instead of the cue! Dinner was generally at a very late hour, and afterwards he took pleasure in reading aloud. Voltaire was the favourite author, and Montholon afterwards confessed to Lord Holland that the same plays, especially "Zaïre," were read rather too often.

"Napoleon slept himself when read to, but he was very observant and jealous if others slept while he read. He watched his audience vigilantly, and '*Mme. Montholon, vous dormez*' was a frequent ejaculation in the course of reading. He was animated with all that he read, especially poetry, enthusiastic at beautiful passages, impatient of faults, and full of ingenious and lively remarks on style."[1]

During this same halcyon season two priests, who had been selected by the Bonapartes, arrived in the island, as also a Corsican doctor, Antommarchi. Napoleon was disappointed with all three. The doctor, though a learned anatomist, knew little of chemistry, and at an early interview with Napoleon passed a catechism on this subject so badly that he was all but chased from the room. The priests came off little better. The elder of them, Buonavita by name, had lived in Mexico, and could talk of little else: he soon fell ill, and his stay in St. Helena was short. The other, a Corsican named Vignali, having neither learning, culture, nor dialectical skill, was tolerated as a respectable adjunct to the household, but had little or no influence over the master. This is to be regretted on many grounds, and partly because his testimony throws no light on Napoleon's religious views.

Here we approach a problem that perhaps can never be cleared up. Unfathomable on many sides of his nature, Napoleon is nowhere more so than when he confronts the eternal verities. That he was a convinced and orthodox Catholic few will venture to assert. At Elba he said to Lord Ebrington: "*Nous ne savons d'où nous venons, ce que nous deviendrons*": the masses ought to have some "fixed point of faith whereon to rest their thoughts." — "*Je suis Catholique parce que mon père l'étoit, et parce que c'étoit la religion de la France.*" He also once or twice expressed to Campbell scorn of the popular creed: and during his

[1] Lord Holland, "Foreign Reminiscences," p. 305.

last voyage, as we have seen, he showed not the slightest interest in the offer of a priest at Funchal to accompany him. At St. Helena the party seems to have limited the observances of religion to occasional reading of the Bible. When Mme. Montholon presented her babe to the Emperor, he teasingly remarked that Las Cases was the most suitable person to christen the infant; to which the mother at once replied that Las Cases was not a good enough Christian for that.

Judging from the entries in Gourgaud's "Journal," this young General pondered more than the rest on religious questions; and to him Napoleon unbosomed his thoughts. — Matter, he says, is everywhere and pervades everything; life, thought, and the soul itself are but properties of matter, and death ends all. When Gourgaud points to the majestic order of the universe as bearing witness to a Creator, Napoleon admits that he believes in "superior intelligences": he avers that he would believe in Christianity if it had been the original and universal creed: but then the Mohammedans "follow a religion simpler and more adapted to their morality than ours." In ten years their founder conquered half the world, which Christianity took three hundred years to accomplish. Or again, he refers to the fact that Laplace, Monge, Berthollet, and Lagrange were all atheists, though they did not proclaim the fact; as for himself, he finds the idea of God to be natural; it has existed at all times and among all peoples. But once or twice he ends this vague talk with the remarkable confession that the sight of myriad deaths in war has made him a materialist. "Matter is everything." — "Vanity of vanities!"[1]

Mirrored as these dialogues are in the eddies of Gourgaud's moods, they may tinge his master's theology with too much of gloom: but, after all, they are by far the most lifelike record of Napoleon's later years, and they show us a nature dominated by the tangible. As for belief in the divine Christ, there seems not a trace. A report has come down to us, enshrined in Newman's prose,

[1] Gourgaud, vol. i., pp. 297, 540, 546; vol. ii., pp. 78, 130, 409, 425. See Las Cases, "Mémorial," vol. iv., p. 124, for Napoleon's defence of polygamy.

that Napoleon once discoursed of the ineffable greatness of Christ, contrasting His enduring hold on the hearts of men with the evanescent rule of Alexander and Cæsar. One hopes that the words were uttered; but they conflict with Napoleon's undoubted statements. Sometimes he spoke in utter uncertainty; at others, as one who wished to believe in Christianity and might perhaps be converted. But in the political testament designed for his son, the only reference to religion is of the diplomatic description that we should expect from the author of the "Concordat": "Religious ideas have more influence than certain narrow-minded philosophers are willing to believe: they are capable of rendering great services to Humanity. By standing well with the Pope, an influence is still maintained over the consciences of a hundred millions of men."

Equally vague was Napoleon's own behaviour as his end drew nigh. For some time past a sharp internal pain — the stab of a penknife, he called it — had warned him of his doom; in April, 1821, when vomiting and prostration showed that the dread ancestral malady was drawing on apace, he bade the Abbé Vignali prepare the large dining-room of Longwood as a *chapelle ardente;* and, observing a smile on Antommarchi's face, the sick man hotly rebuked his affectation of superiority. Montholon, on his return to England, informed Lord Holland that extreme unction was administered before the end came, Napoleon having ordered that this should be done as if solely on Montholon's responsibility, and that the priest, when questioned on the subject, was to reply that he had acted on Montholon's orders, without having any knowledge of the Emperor's wishes. It was accordingly administered, but apparently he was insensible at the time.[1] In his will, also, he declared that he died in communion with the Apostolical Roman Church, in whose bosom he was born. There, then, we must leave this question, shrouded in the mystery that hangs around so much of his life.

The decease of a great man is always affecting: but the death of the hero who had soared to the zenith of military glory and civic achievement seems to touch the very nadir

[1] Lord Holland's "Foreign Reminiscences," p. 316; Colonel Gorrequer's report in "Cornhill" of Feb., 1901.

of calamity. Outliving his mighty Empire, girt around by a thousand miles of imprisoning ocean, guarded by his most steadfast enemies, his son a captive at the Court of the Hapsburgs, and his Empress openly faithless, he sinks from sight like some battered derelict. And Nature is more pitiless than man. The Governor urges on him the best medical advice: but he will have none of it. He feels the grip of cancer, the disease which had carried off his father and was to claim the gay Caroline and Pauline. At times he surmises the truth: at others he calls out "*le foie*," "*le foie*." O'Meara had alleged that his pains were due to a liver complaint brought on by his detention at St. Helena; Antommarchi described the illness as gastric fever (*febbre gastrica pituitosa*); and not until Dr. Arnott was called in on the 1st of April was the truth fully recognized.

At the close of the month the symptoms became most distressing, aggravated as they were by the refusal of the patient to take medicine or food, or to let himself be moved. On May 4th, at Dr. Arnott's insistence, some calomel was secretly administered and with beneficial results, the patient sleeping and even taking some food. This was his last rally: on the morrow, while a storm was sweeping over the island, and tearing up large trees, his senses began to fail: Montholon thought he heard the words *France*, *armée*, *tête d'armée*, *Joséphine:* he lingered on insensible for some hours: the storm died down: the sun bathed the island in a flood of glory, and, as it dipped into the ocean, the great man passed away.

By the Governor's orders Dr. Arnott remained in the room until the body could be medically examined — a precaution which, as Montchenu pointed out, would prevent any malicious attempt on the part of the Longwood servants to cause death to appear as the result of poisoning. The examination, conducted in the presence of seven medical men and others, proved that all the organs were sound except the ulcerated stomach; the liver was rather large, but showed no signs of disease; the heart, on the other hand, was rather under the normal size. Far from showing the emaciation that usually results from prolonged inability to take food, the body was remarkably stout —

FACE OF NAPOLEON AFTER DEATH.

From the plaster cast at the Hôtel de Ville, Ajaccio.

a fact which shows that that tenacious will had its roots in an abnormally firm vitality.[1] After being embalmed, the body was laid out in state, and all beholders were struck with the serene and beautiful expression of the face : the superfluous flesh sank away after death, leaving the well-proportioned features that moved the admiration of men during the Consulate.

Clad in his favourite green uniform, he fared forth to his resting-place under two large weeping willow trees in a secluded valley : the coffin, surmounted by his sword and the cloak he had worn at Marengo, was borne with full military honours by grenadiers of the 20th and 66th Regiments before a long line of red-coats ; and their banners, emblazoned with the names of "Talavera," "Albuera," "Pyrenees," and "Orthez," were lowered in a last salute to our mighty foe. Salvos of artillery and musketry were fired over the grave : the echoes rattled upwards from ridge to ridge and leaped from the splintery peaks far into the wastes of ocean to warn the world beyond that the greatest warrior and administrator of all the ages had sunk to rest.

His ashes were not to remain in that desolate nook : in a clause of his will he expressed the desire that they should rest by the banks of the Seine among the people he had loved so well. In 1840 they were disinterred in presence of Bertrand, Gourgaud, and Marchand, and borne to France. Paris opened her arms to receive the mighty dead ; and Louis Philippe, on whom he had once prophe-

[1] "Colonial Office Records," St. Helena, No. 32 ; Henry, "Events of a Military Life," vol. ii., pp. 80–84 : he also states that Antommarchi, when about to sign the report agreed on by the English doctors, was called aside by Bertrand and Montholon, and thereafter declined to sign it : Antommarchi afterwards issued one of his own, laying stress on cancer *and enlarged liver*, thus keeping up O'Meara's theory that the illness was due to the climate of St. Helena and want of exercise. In our records is a letter of Montholon to his wife of May 6th, 1821, which admits the contrary : "C'est dans notre malheur une grande consolation pour nous d'avoir acquis la preuve que sa mort n'est, et n'a pu être, en aucune manière le résultat de sa captivité." Yet, on his return to Europe, Montholon stoutly maintained that the liver complaint endemic to St. Helena had been the death of his master. It is, however, noteworthy that on his death-bed Napoleon urged Bertrand to be reconciled to Lowe. He and Montholon accordingly went to Plantation House, where, according to all appearance, the dead past was buried.

sied that the crown of France would one day rest, received the coffin in state under the dome of the *Invalides*. There he reposes, among the devoted people whom by his superhuman genius he raised to bewildering heights of glory, only to dash them to the depths of disaster by his monstrous errors.

Viewing his career as a whole, it seems just and fair to assert that the fundamental cause of his overthrow is to be found, not in the failings of the French, for they served him with a fidelity that would wring tears of pity from Rhadamanthus ; not in the treachery of this or that general or politician, for that is little when set against the loyalty of forty millions of men ; but in the character of the man and of his age. Never had mortal man so grand an opportunity of ruling over a chaotic Continent : never had any great leader antagonists so feeble as the rulers who opposed his rush to supremacy. At the dawn of the nineteenth century the old monarchies were effete : insanity reigned in four dynasties, and weak or time-serving counsels swayed the remainder. For several years their counsellors and generals were little better. With the exception of Pitt and Nelson, who were carried off by death, and of Wellington, who had but half an army, Napoleon never came face to face with thoroughly able, well-equipped, and stubborn opponents until the year 1812.

It seems a paradox to say that his excess of good fortune largely contributed to his ruin : yet it is true. His was one of those thick-set combative natures that need timely restraint if their best qualities are to be nurtured and their domineering instincts curbed. Just as the strongest Ministry prances on to ruin if the Opposition gives no effective check, so it was with Napoleon. Had he in his early manhood taken to heart the lessons of adversity, would he have ventured at the same time to fight Wellington in Spain and the Russian climate in the heart of the steppes ? Would he have spurned the offers of an advantageous peace made to him from Prague in 1813 ? Would he have let slip the chance of keeping the "natural frontiers" of France after Leipzig, and her old boundaries when brought to bay in Champagne ? Would

he have dared the uttermost at all points at Waterloo? In truth, after his fortieth year was past, the fervid energies of youth hardened in the mould of triumph; and thence came that fatal obstinacy which was his bane at all those crises of his career. For in the meantime the cause of European independence had found worthy champions — smaller men than Napoleon, it is true, but men who knew that his determination to hold out everywhere and yield nothing must work his ruin. Finally, the same clinging to unreal hopes and the same love of fight characterized his life in St. Helena; so that what might have been a time of calm and dignified repose was marred by fictitious clamours and petty intrigues altogether unworthy of his greatness.

For, in spite of his prodigious failure, he was superlatively great in all that pertains to government, the quickening of human energies, and the art of war. His greatness lies, not only in the abiding importance of his best undertakings, but still more in the Titanic force that he threw into the inception and accomplishment of all of them — a force which invests the storm-blasted monoliths strewn along the latter portion of his career with a majesty unapproachable by a tamer race of toilers. After all, the verdict of mankind awards the highest distinction, not to prudent mediocrity that shuns the chance of failure and leaves no lasting mark behind, but to the eager soul that grandly dares, mightily achieves, and holds the hearts of millions even amidst his ruin and theirs. Such a wonder-worker was Napoleon. The man who bridled the Revolution and remoulded the life of France, who laid broad and deep the foundations of a new life in Italy, Switzerland, and Germany, who rolled the West in on the East in the greatest movement known since the Crusades, and finally drew the yearning thoughts of myriads to that solitary rock in the South Atlantic, must ever stand in the very forefront of the immortals of human story.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF THE CHIEF APPOINTMENTS AND DIGNITIES BESTOWED BY NAPOLEON

[*An asterisk is affixed to the names of his Marshals.*]

Arrighi. Duc de Padua.
*Augereau. Duc de Castiglione.
*Bernadotte. Prince de Ponte Corvo.
*Berthier. Chief of the Staff. Prince de Neufchâtel. Prince de Wagram.
*Bessières. Duc d'Istria. Commander of the Old Guard.
Bonaparte, Joseph. (King of Naples.) King of Spain.
" Louis. King of Holland.
" Jerome. King of Westphalia.
*Brune.
Cambacérès. Arch-Chancellor. Duc de Parma.
Caulaincourt. Duc de Vicenza. Master of the Horse. Minister of Foreign Affairs (1814).
Champagny. Duc de Cadore. Minister of Foreign Affairs (1807–1811).
Chaptal. Minister of the Interior. Comte de Chanteloupe.
Clarke. Minister of War. Duc de Feltre.
Daru. Comte.
*Davoust. Duc d'Auerstädt. Prince d'Eckmühl.
Drouet. Comte d'Erlon.
Drouot. Comte. Aide-Major of the Guard.
Duroc. Grand Marshal of the Palace. Duc de Friuli.
Eugène (Beauharnais). Viceroy of Italy.
Fesch (Cardinal). Grand Almoner.
Fouché. Minister of Police (1804–10). Duc d'Otranto.
*Grouchy. Comte.
Jomini. Baron.
*Jourdan. Comte.
Junot. Duc d'Abrantès.
*Kellermann. Duc de Valmy.
*Lannes. Duc de Montebello.
Larrey. Baron.
Latour-Maubourg. Baron.
Lauriston. Comte.
Lavalette. Comte. Minister of Posts.

*Lefebvre. Duc de Danzig.
*Macdonald. Duc de Taranto.
Maret. Minister of Foreign Affairs (1811–14). Duc de Bassano.
*Marmont. Duc de Ragusa.
*Masséna. (Duc de Rivoli.) Prince d'Essling.
Miot. Comte de Melito.
Méneval. Baron.
Mollien. Comte. Minister of the Treasury.
*Moncey. Duc de Conegliano.
Montholon. Comte.
*Mortier. Duc de Treviso.
Mouton. Comte de Lobau.
*Murat. (Grand Duc de Berg.) King of Naples.
*Ney. (Duc d'Elchingen.) Prince de la Moskwa.
*Oudinot. Duc de Reggio.
Pajol. Baron.
Pasquier, Duc de. Prefect of Police.
*Perignon.
*Poniatowski.
Rapp. Comte.
Reynier. Duc de Massa.
Rémusat. Chamberlain.
Savary. Duc de Rovigo. Minister of Police (1810–14).
Sébastiani. Comte.
*Sérurier.
*Soult. Duc de Dalmatia.
*St. Cyr, Marquis de.
*Suchet. Duc d'Albufera.
Talleyrand. Minister of Foreign Affairs (1799–1807). Grand Chamberlain (1804–8). Prince de Benevento.
Vandamme. Comte.
*Victor. Duc de Belluno.

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